

“YOGA IN ACTION” FOR BEGINNERS

Geeta S. Iyengar

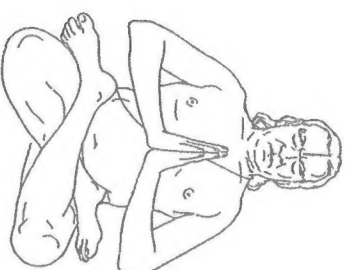
A preliminary course of āsanas and prāṇāyāma based on

the syllabus taught at the Ramāmaṇi Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute



Invocation to Patañjali

*yogena citasya padena vācām
 malan̄ śaṁṛasya ca vaidyakena
 yopākaroṭtan̄ pravaraṁ munīnām
 patañjaliṁ prāñjalirānato' smi
 ābāhu puruṣākāraṁ
 śaṁkha cakrāśi dhātṛṇam
 sahasra śīrasaṁ śvetam
 praṇamāmi patañjaliṁ*



Dedication to Gurujī

*Who guides one and all,
 Innocent, ignorant and intelligent,
 Young, old and infirm,
 Men, women and children,
 Raw beginners, accomplished and advanced,
 All pupils, with equal zeal and zest,
 He takes to the zenith*

YOG,
Mumbai.

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PREFACE

YOG is very much delighted to publish *Yoga in Action for Beginners*, which is based on the syllabus charted out by *Gurujī* for beginners. The book is intended as a practical guide for those who attend the preliminary course at Ramāmaṇi Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute.

Often, when the beginners attempt to practise on their own they have forgotten what they learnt in the class, they are unsure as to where to begin and they get confused. This book will give guidance to them, in their home practice, after they have first studied with the teacher in the class.

The book serves the purpose of prompting the memory of the student to learn the *āsanas* along with the action-wise approach that is involved in the performance of them. Every aspirant, in the beginning or *ārambhāvasthā*, needs to know what he or she exactly has to do. This book guides the student in how to do *sādhana*, it shows the direct method of self study – *svādhyāya* and directs the will power in a right

direction, so that one gets the vision of practice – *abhyāsa*, especially for those who are treading freshly on the path of yoga.

The purpose of the book is not at all to give detailed and elaborate techniques of each *āsana*, since that is done by the teacher while teaching in the class. Further details and subtle points are available to be studied in *Gurujī's* books, *Light on Yoga*, *Light on Prāṇyāma* and *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, as well as in my book *Yoga: A Gem for Women*. All practitioners are recommended to refer to these above books often, to know the depth of the subject.

Yoga in Action for Beginners is not the end, but the beginning of yoga. It is for the practitioner to ignite the hidden force of yoga from within, so that it throws the Light on the path of the yogic journey.

– May the blessings of Lord Patañjali be with you in your yogic journey.

– Geeta S. Iyengar

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

YOG wishes to heartily thank all those who contributed by giving their precious time and invaluable efforts, inspite of having busy schedules, in order to bring out this book "Yoga in Action for Beginners – A Preliminary Course"

*Preparing this volume for publication was a karmadhārā – a continuous process of reading, correcting, editing, typing, punctuating, arranging and designing – for all those involved. YOG wish to express gratitude and to thank the following for their generous assistance:-
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*This book is intended to introduce a syllabus of yoga for beginners. The contents of this book were first produced by the author as a series of lecture-demonstrations called Yoga in Action,*1 in September 1994, at the Ramāmaṇi Jeṅgar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI), Pune, India.*

A preliminary course is specifically designed for beginners and newcomers who come seeking initiation in the path of yoga. The Institute also conducts elementary, intermediate and advanced courses for those who wish to proceed further. This is a kind of illustrative book, a guide for those who attend the preparatory classes, since it covers the syllabus meant for the preliminary course. This book will guide pupils to do homework and practice of āsanas and prāṇāyāma, with a proper orientation.

The subject of yoga is as vast as the sky, it cannot be bound by the limit of time. Yet, the course guides the student to know from where to begin and how to proceed further.

The syllabus of the preliminary course is designed to be conducted over a period of eight months. However, since the pupils are expected to penetrate their awareness while practising the āsanas, it takes almost a year to complete the course. The teachers too, cannot proceed further until the pupils show some consolidation and improvement in their performance. This syllabus will enable those

who have recently begun yoga classes, to know what they will cover in a period of one year. Senior and advanced students will be able to refresh their memory and check whether they are missing anything in their practice.

The syllabus consists of forty-nine basic āsanas and two stages of one basic prāṇāyāma, known as Ujjāyī. However, emphasis is given to the intermediate stages of some of the āsanas since the pupils are not always able to go directly to the final āsana. These intermediate stages certainly are of no less importance. We have included them here for the practitioner's benefit.

*1 The series *Yoga in Action* in video and CD formats is available through RIMYI.

Introduction

A variety of *āsanas* are included to achieve the goal of improving the body structure and lubricating the joints, creating freedom of movement in the joints. The *āsanas* also strengthen and lengthen the ligaments and muscles. The *āsanas* have been selected with the view that they will tone the internal organs and strengthen the nerves. The functional performance of the organic body is subsequently improved.

Gurujī, while charting out the programme, has taken into consideration all the systems of the body such as the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, glandular, muscular, skeletal, excretory, reproductive, lymphatic and nervous systems. For good health, all these systems have to function properly with co-operation and co-ordination. The course has been structured so that there is a harmonious functioning of all of these systems.*² This in turn prepares one physically, psychologically and mentally to take to the practice of *pāñcāyāma*, since it yields sensitivity, tolerance, freedom and openness of the mind, along with discipline and moral strength.

You may be puzzled as to why so many *āsanas* are introduced. People's psychology is to "do less" and for this to "expect more". Remember that if the effort is less then the effect too is less. If the efforts are right then the effects are right. A minimum expectation of practitioners is to derive physical and mental health as well as poise in the body and peace of mind. The number and variety of *āsanas* is chosen on the basis of this minimum expectation, so that day to day stress is removed.

*²For an extensive list of the effects and benefits of the *āsanas* please read *Light on Yoga* by B.K.S. Iyengar, as well as *YOGA A Gem for Women* by Geeta S. Iyengar. These books give descriptions of the various parts of the body that derive benefit from their execution as well as the remedy for ailments. These benefits will not be listed here.

Gurujī planned the programme in such a manner that one develops an interest in yoga and a wish to gain further knowledge in the yogic path. In the case of any one wishing to discontinue the classes, then the knowledge that is gathered, the experience that is gained and the practice that is done, is enough to continue the yogic practice for maintenance of health. In this sense the syllabus is complete in itself.

This ancient Indian culture, presented to us by our sages, is based on essential human requirements, not only to gain physical health but also for the achievement of the higher aims of life. For this purpose, man requires moral strength, constructive faith and the development of consciousness.

Āsanas are not created out of the blue. They came into existence as a methodical approach to living and therefore, they are classified systematically. The seemingly physical *āsanas* have a great potential to change the behavioural pattern of the practitioner, which in turn changes the mental stature, enabling the practitioner to proceed further and remain on the spiritual path. This systematic classification is based on the anatomical structure and function of the body and a sequential progression of movement. It brings a progressive activation of the internal body so that one penetrates through the outer body to the inner one, and again, through the body and the mind to excavate the hidden energy of one's very existence, to reach the source of being, the Soul.

In this syllabus we have the standing, sitting and twisting *āsanas* along with forward, backward and supine extensions. There are also abdominal contractions and inversions. The classification of *āsanas* enables us to analyse our own body movements, measure our will power and penetrate into the consciousness, so that during the

course of practice the consciousness is directed within, enriching our life, making it positive and meaningful.

This book does not set out to explain at a technical level. Rather it is a practical guide to the most beneficial order of steps to be taken in the practice of yoga. The shortened and concise techniques that follow are like indicators for the student. For a fuller explanation and detailed techniques one has to refer to the books *Light on Yoga* and *YOGA: A Gem for Women and Arogya Yoga* (Marāṭhi).

Often, pupils do not remember the *āsanas* or their names.

While learning the *āsanas*, apart from putting the body into the correct position, one needs to know the name and form of the *āsana* in order to be in the correct posture. This aids one in the linking of the movement, action and inner adjustment, not only in that particular *āsana*, but also with the next *āsana*. Knowing the name and form of the *āsana* before entering into the *āsana* yields a preparation not only at the physical level but also at the mental level. Before one enters into the *āsana* the mind should be fresh, similar to the mind of a baby looking at its toys. Though it is a known thing, a known act, already conceived by the mind, the mind should conceive each *āsana* afresh. Learning and acquainting oneself with each group and sequence of *āsanas* enables one to perform them without any confusion.

Here are a few hints, cautions, rules and regulations for the practitioners.

One can practise *āsanas* either in the mornings before going to work or in the evenings after returning from work, according to one's convenience. Housewives can choose the time after the children go to school and their husband goes to the office. Even

afternoons need not be discarded, if there is a sufficient gap between meals and the practice.

A gap of four hours is essential after meals. If a sufficient interval is not given, one may feel nausea and end up with vomiting, sickness, headache, heaviness and body-ache. One can have light beverages half an hour before the practice, if necessary. Meals can be taken an hour after practice.

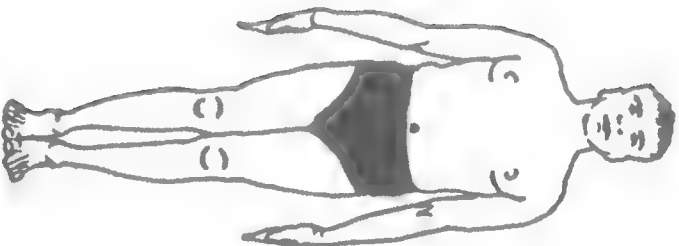
One should wear suitable loose clothing so that free movement is not hampered.

One should not begin to practise when one is totally exhausted, feeling breathless or having been in strong sunlight. Similarly, one should not practise immediately after doing any other physical exercises such as gymnastics, athletics, swimming etc. There should be a time gap for recovery. Or, one has to choose only the *āsanas*, which bring recovery.

Do not hold the breath while doing any of the *āsanas*. Breathe normally. Always inhale or exhale through the nose. Inhale or exhale where it is specified. Concentrate more on the performance of the correct posture rather than the breath. The particulars of breathing become known only when one is properly established in the *āsanas*. If the *āsana* is correct, the breath moves properly.

Part 1

1. *Samasthiti*
2. *Ūrdhva Hastāsana*
3. *Ūrdhva Baddhānguliyāsana*
4. *Namaskārāsana*
5. *Ūrdhva Namaskārāsana*
6. *Gomukhāsana*
7. *Paśchima Namaskārāsana*
8. *Vīkṣāsana*
9. *Utkatāsana*



Samasthiti

Chapter I

STANDING ĀSANAS

We begin with the standing *āsanas*. The standing *āsanas* are known as *Uttiṣṭha sthiti*. Throughout most of our waking hours we stand on our legs, but we do not pay attention to the correct method of standing. These *āsanas* bring our attention to how we stand and correct the posture of the body. One learns the basic position of standing firmly on the legs. One learns how to distribute the weight when the arms are taken through various movements, without disturbing the position and shaking the entire body.

Part 1

1. *Samasthiti*

- stand upright.
- feet together, toes, ankles and heels touching.
- see that the body-weight is spread evenly over the feet.
- tighten the kneecaps and lift the knees up.
- shin bones in line with the thigh bones.
- front of the thighs pressed back.
- have the spine erect, chest lifted.

- arms straight down by the sides, in line with the hips.
- roll the shoulder bones back and tuck the shoulder-blades in.
- neck straight, head straight
- look straight ahead.

Learn to have an overall glance over the whole body to feel its existence and nearness. Learn to distribute the weight evenly on the feet, soles and heels.

Note: Do not consider this āsana unimportant since it is very simple. The more you attend to it, the more you begin to realise the defect in your own body's posture.

In *Samasthiti*, the arms are extended downward from the shoulders to the knuckles. Align the shoulders so that one is standing straight and properly balanced.

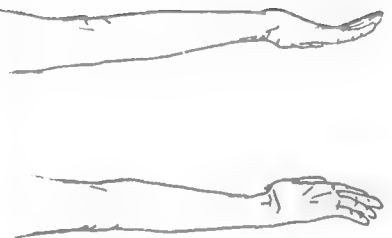
Spread and extended the bottom of the feet; align and balance the shins and thighbones. Extend the hamstrings. Create arches in the feet. Position the chest and the head properly. Extend the side walls of the chest taking the arms back slightly.

2. *Ūrdhva Hastāsana*

- a) palms facing each other
- b) palms facing forward

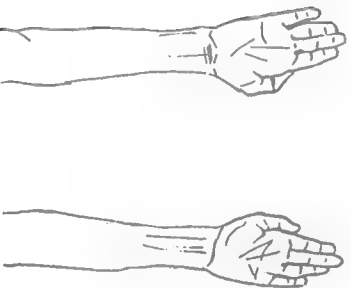
- a) palms facing each other

- stand in *Samasthiti*, with the arms extended down by the sides, palms facing the thighs, shoulders rolling back as well as down.
- exhale, extend the arms straight forward and above the head. The upper arms should be in line with the ears, palms facing each other.



Ūrdhva Hastāsana

palms facing each other



Urdhva Hastāsana
palms facing forward.

- wrists and fingers extended.
- look up and check that the palms are facing each other and exactly parallel and then look straight ahead.

Learn to open the sides of the rib cage.

- b) palms facing forward.
- with the hand position as above, rotate the upper arms so that the palms face forward.
- elbows and wrists straight and extended.
- palms open, fingers extended.
- keep the shoulder-blades and trapezium moving down the back.
- look straight ahead.
- exhale, slowly lower the arms down by the sides.

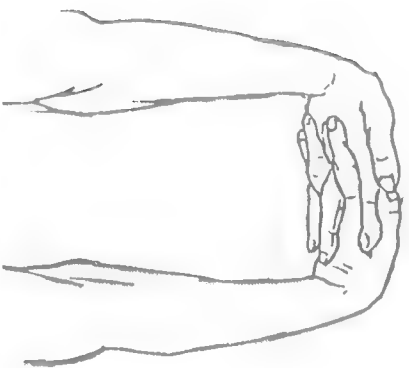
Learn the stretching of the arms against the steadiness and firmness of the legs and activate the shoulder-blades and back of the rib cage.

3. Urdhva Baddhānguliyāsana

Interlocking of the fingers in *Samasthiti* exercises the knuckles. All the joints of each finger are opened. The chest is broadened and lengthened. While interlocking, one has to remember the position of fingers in order to change the interlock. While interlocked, observe which little finger is at the loose end. Often, the interchange in the interlocked fingers is not understood properly. The interlocked fingers always cover the back of the palms and not the front. To change the interlock, bring the little finger of the other hand to be at the loose end. The rest of the technique such as locking tightly up to the 'web' or 'pit' of the fingers and reversing the wrist is followed in the same manner. This action of interlocking the fingers has to be learnt properly before attempting *Sālamba Śrīṣāsana*.



Baddhānguliyāsana



Urdhva Baddhāṅguilyāsana

- interlock the fingers in front of you. (see picture)
- check which little finger is at the loose end.
- rotate the palms of the hands and wrists away from you, (thumbs pointing towards the floor), straighten the elbows.
- extend the arms up towards the ceiling, upper arms in line with the ears.
- open the palms fully.
- have the entire surface of both palms equally face the ceiling.
- bring the hands forward.
- release the interlock, lower the arms down.
- now change the interlock.

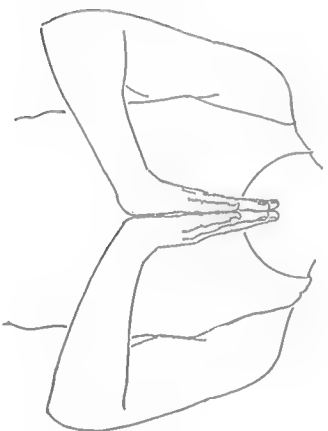
Learn to interlock the fingers and give a vertical extension to the body.

Note: In positions 2 & 3 above, when you extend the arms over the head, do not allow the pelvis to push forward. Resist this by keeping the thighs firmly pressed back, tailbone in, chest lifted. Do not change the Samasthiti position of the legs.

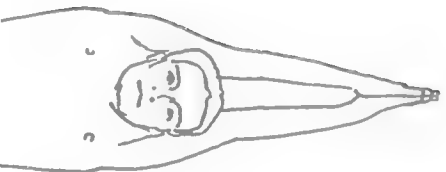
4. Namaskārāsana

There are three variations of this āsana namely, *Namaskārāsana* – in front of the sternum bone; *Urdhva Namaskārāsana* – above the head; *Pāśchima Namaskārāsana* – behind the chest. However, one has to learn the *Gomukhāsana* arm work before one attempts *Pāśchima Namaskārāsana*.

This gesture of the palms is also known as *Ātmāñjali Mūdrā* or *Namaskāra Mūdrā*, and is done during *dhyāna* (meditation). It is one of the steps of *Sūrya Namaskāra* (PART 13). It is an Indian way of greeting.



Namaskārāsana



Ūrdhva Namaskārāsana

Namaskārāsana

- stand in *Samasthiti*.
- bending the elbows bring the palms together in front of the sternum. The thumb side is near the sternum. Do not shorten the biceps.
- have an equal contact between the base of the palm, the middle of the palm and the length of all the fingers.
- bring the arms down by lengthening and extending the arms at the biceps.

Learn to keep the pressure of the palms on each other equally, without exerting the muscles of the arms.

Note: The fingers should be pointing slightly off vertical, away from the chest, so that you are able to maintain the shoulder bones rolling back and the sides of the chest moving forward. The elbows drop down. The arms should not obstruct the natural expansion of the chest in the breathing process.

5. Ūrdhva Namaskārāsana – above the head

It is one of the steps of *Sūrya Namaskāra*.

- extend the arms above the head as in *Ūrdhva Hastāsana*, elbows straight, wrists and palms open.
- keeping the elbows straight, maintaining the chest and collar bones broad, bring the palms together.
- keep the arms extending up and the elbows locked.
- press both the palms firmly together.
- do not look down.
- exhale, release the arms down by the sides.



Gomukhāsana

fixing the arm from above



Gomukhāsana

fixing the arm from below

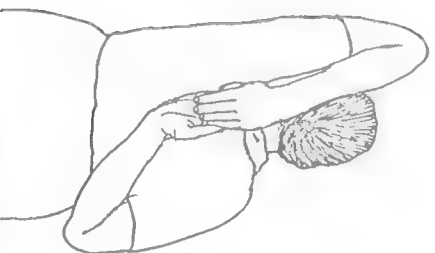
Learn to extend the sides of the trunk vertically up by opening the armpit chest.

Note: This can be done raising the arms over the head either from Namaskārāsana, or by extending the arms straightforward or by spreading the arms sideways.

6. Gomukhāsana (arm work or Hasta Mūdrā)

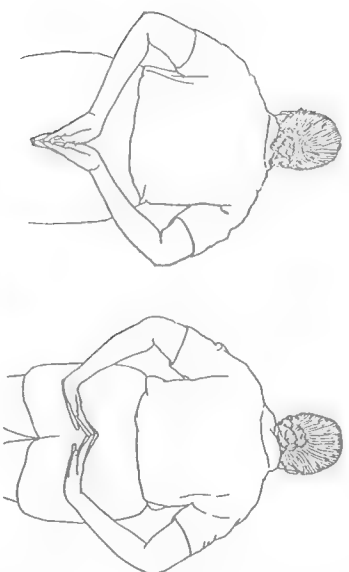
- a) fixing the arm from above
- b) fixing the arm from below
- c) clasping the fingers/palms

- a) fixing the arm from above
 - stand in *Samasthiti*.
 - inhale, raise the right arm up.
 - bend the elbow, so the hand comes between the shoulder-blades, fingers pointing down.
 - exhale, take the hand up and release the arm down.
 - repeat the same with the left hand.
- b) fixing the arm from below
 - stand in *Samasthiti*.
 - bend the right arm and take it behind, so that the back of the palm rests against the buttocks, then slide the hand up between the shoulder-blades.
 - exhale, release the hand down.
 - repeat on the left.



Gomukhāsana

clasping the fingers/palms



- c) clasping the fingers/palms
 - fix the right hand from behind at the bottom.
 - lift the left arm from the top and clasp it with the right palm.
 - both the palms shake hands with each other.
 - release and repeat by taking the left hand from the bottom and the right from the top.

Learn to open the armpits. See that the clasp of the palms behind the chest, opens the chest.

7. Paśchima Namaskārāsana

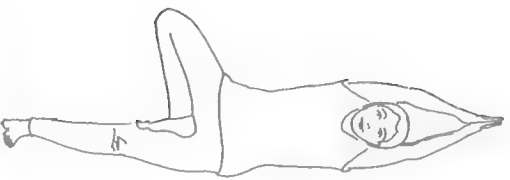
This *āsana* is learnt only after learning the *Gomukhāsana* arm work. It is an advanced movement of the hands as far as this group is concerned.

- take the arms behind the back and press the fingertips of both hands together with the fingers pointing down.
- rotate the arms and wrists so that the fingers point towards the back and then point up.
- slide the hands in this position, to bring the hands up in line with the shoulder-blades.
- keep an even pressure on the entire palm with all the fingers extended.
- rotate the shoulder bones back and move the shoulder-blades into the back.
- move the elbows towards the floor while moving the hands further up towards the back of the head.
- to release, slide the hands down and come to *Samasthiti*.

Learn the rotational movements of the shoulders, arms and wrists, without caving in the chest.



Paśchima Namaskārāsana



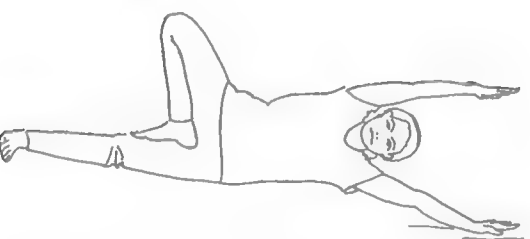
Virksāsana



fixing the sole of right
foot inside left thigh



near the wall



8. Virksāsana

- a) independent
- b) back to the wall
- c) near the wall

- a) independent
- stand in *Samasthiti*.
- bend the right knee, catch hold of the right foot, take the knee out to the right side.
- place the sole of the right foot high on the inside of the left thigh, the toes pointing downwards.
- keep the left leg straight and steady.
- extend the arms straight over the head, palms together, as in *Urdhva Namaskārāsana*.
- with the head straight, look straight ahead.
- exhale, lower the right foot to the floor, take the arms down, repeat on the other side.

Learn to balance on one leg. Learn alertness.

Note: For those who find balancing difficult, the following variations may be helpful to practise first.

- b) back to the wall
 - stand so your back lightly touches the wall and follow the āsana as above.
- c) near the wall
 - stand with your left thigh parallel to the wall, but six inches away from the wall.
 - place the finger tips of the left hand on the wall.
 - place the foot as earlier described.
 - slowly take the right arm up to *Urdhva Hastāsana* position, pause.

- carefully slide the left arm up the wall, six inches at a time until the left arm is parallel with the right arm.
- join the two arms, looking straight ahead.
- release the arms, touch the wall with the left fingertips, release the bent right leg and lower the foot to the floor.
- stand in *Samasthiti*.
- turn the other way round so that the right thigh is parallel to the wall.

Learn first to fix the bottom foot against the inner thigh of the opposite leg. The arm-lifting can be learnt later.

Vikṣāṣana comes easier on the leg on which you normally carry your weight while standing and comes with difficulty on the side that you put less weight on. Normally, we are not aware of how we stand or that we distribute the weight unevenly. Right performance of *Samasthiti* makes us aware of the uneven distribution of weight and corrects this defect.

9. *Utkatāsana*

- a) arm action followed by leg action
- b) leg action, followed by arm action
- c) facing the wall
- d) back to the wall



Utkatāsana

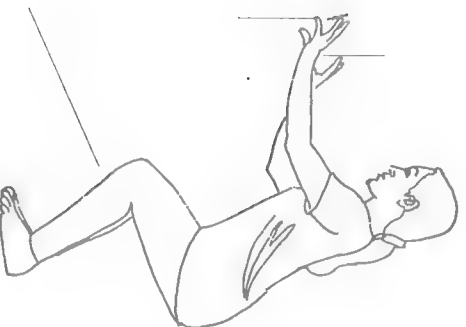
arm action followed by leg action

- a) arm action followed by leg action
 - stand in *Samasthiti*.
 - take the arms to *Urdhva Hastāsana*.
 - without losing the full extension of the arms do *Urdhva Namaskārāsana*. The elbows tend to bend, do not allow them to bend.
 - bend the knees, lowering the hips down so that the thighs are parallel to the floor; the heels should be on the floor.
 - keep the trunk erect, chest lifted.
 - inhale and return to *Samasthiti*.



Uttarakāsana

leg action, followed by arm action



Utkaṭāsana

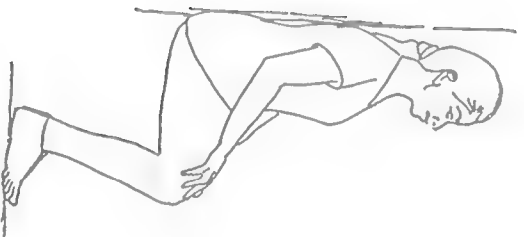
facing the wall

- b) leg action, followed by arm action
- stand in *Samasthiti* with the hands on the waist.
 - exhale, bend the knees as above, lower the buttocks down.
 - extend the arms above the head; bring the palms together without dropping or sinking the sternum.
 - keep the trunk lifted.
 - keep the thighs parallel to the floor; maintain the full extension of the arms straight up towards the ceiling.
 - straighten the legs to come to *Samasthiti*.

Note: Technique (a) is easier than (b), but (b) brings firmness in muscles compared to (a). The further variations (c) and (d) are for those having difficulty with steadiness and balance.

- c) facing the wall
- stand six to eight inches away from the wall.
 - place the fingertips of both hands on the wall at chest height, making a cup shape of the palms. Elbows should be slightly bent. Check that you are not leaning forward to touch the wall.
 - bend the knees, bring the thighs parallel to the floor.
 - inhale, straighten the legs, remove the fingertips from the wall.

Learn to bend the knees properly and maintain the lift of the spine.



Utkatāsana
back to the wall

- d) back to the wall – (This method is applicable for those who suffer from polio, paralysis, weak knees, knock knees etc).
- stand 1' to 1' 6" away from the wall.
- place the fingertips on the wall behind and take the back to rest against the wall.
- keeping the back against the wall, exhale and bend the knees, releasing the buttock bones down.
- keep the back waist in touch with the wall and at the same time keep the chest lifted.
- without losing contact with the wall raise the arms straight above the head and then join the palms together,
- inhale, straighten the legs and be in *Samasthiti*

Learn to flex the knee and thigh joints without stooping and dropping the spinal muscles.

Note: When bending the knees in Utkatāsana, take the buttock bones straight down, do not push them out behind, nor lean the chest forward. Try to maintain the length of the sides of the trunk, the same as in Samasthiti.

Utkatāsana tones the back muscles and the abdominal organs, develops the chest muscles and extends the gluteal muscles. The diaphragm is lifted in *Utkatāsana* which gives a gentle massage to the heart. The shin i.e. the weight bearing bone, is strengthened. One learns to flex the thigh joint, ankle and knee joint. The exterior spinal muscles are strengthened.

Apart from the above given effects, there are other particular "effects" derived from the *āsanas*. These are to be observed in the practice of the *āsanas*. This "observation" needs to be learnt and cultivated the same as any skill. It does not require any special talent in the execution of *āsanas* and so is available to all. As the correction and precision in performance develop, the *āsanas* become effective on the body and mind.

The keen perception and observation that comes from this practice brings to the yoga practitioner stability in the body and clarity of awareness that enriches the whole person.

In all these standing *āsanas*, the orientation of the centre of the body is maintained over the feet, and the spine is kept vertical and erect.

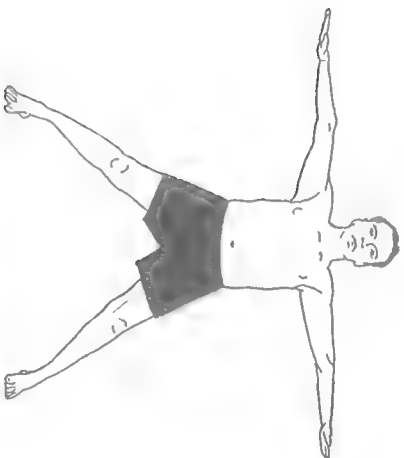
Normally when standing, the heels tend to be close and the toes come apart, the thighs turn to face out and the calves shrink in. One has to learn to turn the front of the thighs outside in and the calves inside out. In *Samasthiti*, the feet are placed parallel on the floor. Attention is placed on the evenness of the weight to be carried on both feet, as well as the different parts of the feet i.e., inner and outer heels and the full circumference of the heels. The arches are lifted, the ankle bones placed exactly equal to each other, bringing the shin bones in to be in line with each other. With the shinbones straight and in line with the thighbones, the 'gross' muscles that support them are brought to their correct placement. This allows them to support the whole frame of the body with little waste of energy. With the legs correctly placed, there is great support and freedom for the whole pelvic girdle. Unknown tilts are reduced.

The even length on both sides of the trunk/waist is to be maintained, even through the different arm and leg movements of the *āsanas*. One learns to synchronise the movements of the arms and legs. The arm movements are to be performed without disturbing the central core of this essentially upright posture. In the normal walk of life one is not aware of fingers and toes. Here, one becomes aware of the remote areas of the extremities. When the *āsanas* from this group are done in quick succession, one need not do warming up exercises as they occur in a natural way.

The *āsanas* are simple, but to learn inner alignment the practitioner has to apply the intelligence. While stretching the arms up, one should not protrude the stomach forward; one should not make the lumbar over-concave. The arm movement in all these *āsanas* helps to open the joints of the shoulders, elbows, wrists, fingers and knuckles. In the correct positioning of *Samasthiti*, the mind is engaged in watching the limbs and trunk, resulting in a turning of the mind inward towards the core.

PART 2

10. *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*
11. *Pārśva Hasta Pādāsana*
12. *Uttitha Trikoṇāsana*
13. *Virabhadraśana II*



Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana

Pregnant women with a normal, healthy pregnancy, having no complications, can do all these *āsanas* except *Vīkṣāsana* and *Utkatāsana*.

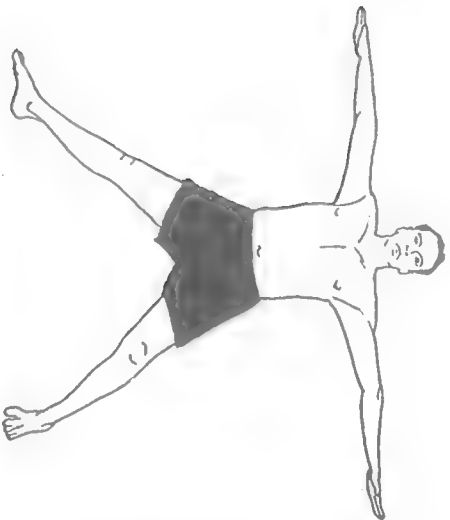
In this group of *āsanas*, one learns to maintain the body alignment while turning or bending the legs. One learns to adjust the body against the movements and the motion of the legs.

PART 2

10. *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*

- from *Samasthiti*
- inhale, jump 4ft apart
- keep the feet parallel and pointing forwards.
- knees lifted, thighs back
- trunk and chest lifted.
- extend the arms straight out at shoulder level; keep the shoulders down and shoulder-blades inwards.
- keep the elbows straight, palms open facing down, fingers extended.
- neck straight, head straight, look straight ahead.
- come back to *Samasthiti*.

Learn while jumping, to spread the legs to the full distance and to place the feet accurately. Learn to extend the arms in line with the shoulders and to align the feet.



Pārsva Hasta Pādāsana

11. *Pārsva Hasta Pādāsana*

- go to *Utthita Hasta Pādāsana*.
- turn the right leg, thigh and foot 90° to the right.
- turn the left foot slightly in.
- check that the middle of the thigh, knee and ankle are in line.
- as the leg rotates to the right, resist having the whole trunk following by turning the abdomen in the opposite direction.
- keep the head, middle throat, centre chest and navel in one vertical line.
- keep both sides of the waist even and lifted.
- come to *Utthita Hasta Pādāsana*; do on the left side.
- come back to *Samasthiti*.

Learn to turn the legs and feet, without shaking the rest of the body.

12. *Utthita Trikoṇāsana*

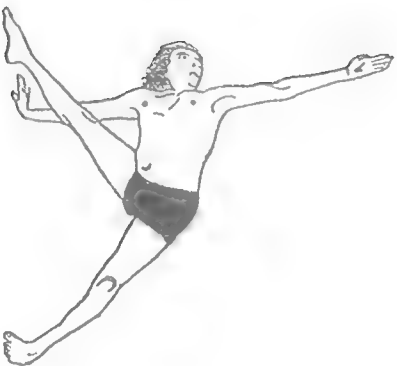
- a) hand on waist
- b) arm up



Utthita Trikoṇāsana

hand on waist

- a) hand on waist
- from *Utthita Hasta Pādāsana*.
- go to *Pārsva Hasta Pādāsana* on the right side.
- exhale, extend the trunk to the right, place the right hand down on the right shinbone, near the ankle.
- place the left hand on the waist, with the elbow bent.
- turn the chest and waist towards the ceiling, turn the head and look up.

**Uttitha Trikoṇāsana**

arm up

**Virabhadraṣāna II**

leg movement with hands on waist

- b) arm up
 - as above, after extending to the right and placing the hand on the right shinbone, stretch the left arm straight up in line with the left shoulder.
 - both the arms and the legs are straight
 - turn the head and look up at the left thumb.
 - inhale, come up to *Paśīva Hasta Pādāsana* and then *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*. Now do on the other side.

Learn to bend the trunk sideways and turn the trunk and neck. Learn alignment of the legs and arms.

13. *Virabhadraṣāna II*

- a) leg movement with hands on waist
- b) then with arms spreading.

- a) leg movement with hands on waist

- follow *Samasthiti* and *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*, place the hands on the waist and do *Paśīva*

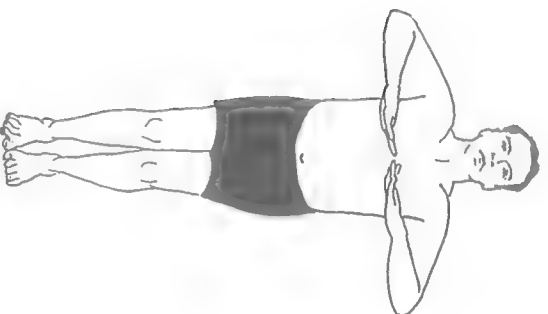
Hasta Pādāsana.

- keep the centre of the torso vertical, lift both sides of the trunk evenly.
- exhale, bend the right leg to a right angle, the knee in line with the ankle.
- the thigh is parallel and the shin is perpendicular to the floor.
- the left leg remains straight, the left foot remains on the floor.
- inhale, straighten the right leg, turn the foot to face forward and now repeat the steps on the other side.

- b) arms spreading
 - from *Samasthiti* follow the points above for the leg position.
 - keep the centre of the torso vertical, chest lifted.



Virabhadra II
arms spreading.



Jumping into the position

- extend the arms out to the sides at shoulder height, keeping the elbows straight, wrists and fingers extended.
- exhale, bend the right leg to a right angle, the knee in line with the ankle.
- the thigh is parallel, shin perpendicular to the floor.
- turn the head to look along the right arm.
- come back to *Pārsīva* and *Uthīṭhīa Hasta Pādāsana*, do on the left side and then come back to *Samasthiti*.

Learn to bend the leg to a square against the stretched leg, without allowing the trunk to lean towards the bent leg.
Learn to co-ordinate these opposite actions.

Note: 1) While practising it is difficult to attend to the legs as well as the arms at the same time. Therefore, first make the leg movements on each side keeping the hands on the waist – then repeat with the arms spread.
2) One can do all these āsanās against the wall (back to the wall) if one is weak, aged and not capable of judging the alignment

In all these āsanās one has to learn to jump in order to spread the legs apart. This “jumping action” gives a kind of springy movement to the body and makes one feel light.

Jumping into the position

- stand in *Samasthiti*.
- take the palms near the chest, palms facing the floor.
- palms and elbows in line, parallel to the floor.
- bend the knees as in *Utkatāsana*.

- inhale, jump and spread the arms and legs to *Uttithia Hasta Pādāsana*
- similarly, to come back, bend the knees slightly and fanning the arms slightly up, come back to *Samasthiti* with a jump.



Learn to jump and simultaneously spread the arms and legs.
Learn to be quick and swift.

It would not be an exaggeration if I say that people are afraid even to spread their legs apart. They feel that they are doing something unusual. As keeping the feet together is difficult, so too is spreading the legs. As soon as you spread your legs apart, you feel the stretch of the legs for the first time. You become aware of your legs, especially their inner and outer edges, as well as the front and back of the legs. Often the bottom of the feet are shrunk because of the fear of falling due to a slippery floor. Now, you become aware, you stretch the bottom of the feet and open the arches of the feet. You neither extend your arms, nor open the pelvic girdle or chest. Normally, energy in the legs flows downwards, whereas, for the first time, you feel the energy of the legs ascending upwards. Similarly, the arms are spread to the side. This opens the intercostal muscles of the chest that are between each of the ribs.

As you proceed to go to the next *āsana*, you begin to see the movement of the appendicular skeleton improving. The appendicular skeleton includes the pelvic girdles, pectoral girdle, the bones of the arms, forearms, elbows, wrists, fingers, thighs, knees, ankles, feet and toes. Through the mechanism of the various movements, you learn to work on the spine and the organic body from within. For example, in *Uttithia Trikoṇāsana*, when you adjust your shoulders, shoulder-blades, arms and armpits etc., you subsequently begin to adjust the thoracic spine and the chest. This adjustment helps to develop the chest. Similarly, through the legs you reach the lumbar, sacrum and abdominal regions.

All these *āsanas* correct deformity in the legs and tone the leg muscles. They relieve backaches, neck-sprains, reduce the fat around the waist, hips and thighs, reduce acidity, release gas, remove heaviness and bloating sensations in the stomach. The sluggishness of the vital organs of the body is removed and those organs are stimulated and activated.

The standing *āsanas* not only act on the structural and organic body but they especially benefit women, improving the functioning of the reproductive system, preventing malfunctioning of the ovaries and strengthening the uterus. Even pregnant women can do these poses without any fear.

Note: All these āsanās, except Ukaṭāsana and the jumping movement can be done during normal menstruation.

PART 3

PART 3

14. *Uttitha Pārśvakoṇāsana*

15. *Virābhadrāsana I*

16. *Vimānāsana*

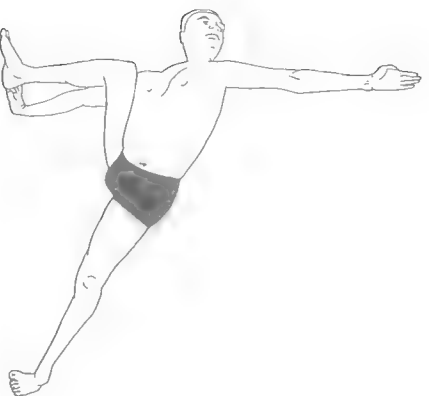
This group of *āsanas* includes sideways bending and sideways turning. While the arm position changes, one realises mistakes occurring in the leg/trunk position and can correct them.

14. *Uttitha Pārśvakoṇāsana*

- a) arm straight up.
- b) arm over the head

- a) arm straight up.
- jump to *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*.
- follow the instructions to *Virābhadrāsana II*.
- exhale, take the right hand down to the floor, keeping the chest facing the front.
- extend the left arm straight up in line with the shoulder, elbow locked, palms/fingers extended towards the ceiling, turn the head to look up past the left thumb.
- inhale, come up to *Pārśva* and then *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana* and do on the other side.

Learn to keep the structure of the thoracic chest broad. Do not put dead weight on the bent leg.



Uttitha Pārśvakoṇāsana

arm straight up.



Uttitha Pārsvakoṇāsana
arm over the head

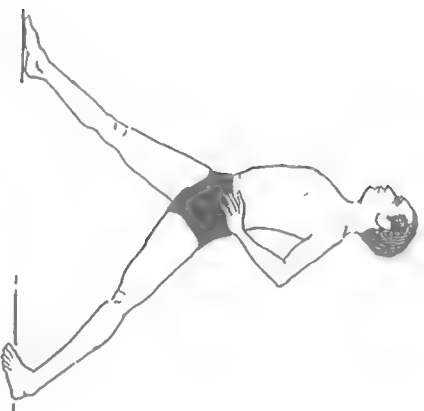
Note: Since the chest and abdomen have to rotate up towards the ceiling, keep the top hand on the waist and turn the trunk.

- b) arm over the head
- from the above position.
- turn the head to look up past the thumb.
- exhale, extend the left arm over the head in line with the left ear.
- inhale, come up to Pārsva and then Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana and do on the other side.

Learn to give a single extension from left foot to left hand while doing on the right and vice versa.

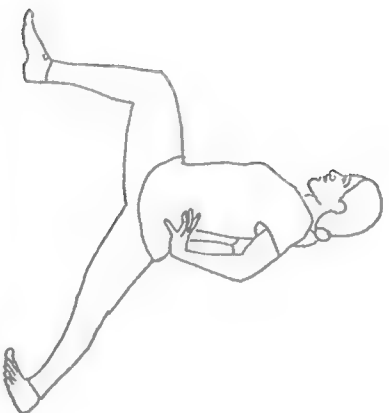
15. Virabhadraśana I

- a) turning the trunk
- b) bending the knee to 90°
- c) stretching the arms to the sides (16 – Vimānāsana)
- d) final pose



Virabhadraśana I
turning the trunk

- a) turning the trunk
- stand in Samasthiti.
- jump to Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana.
- take the hands on the waist.
- turn the right foot out 90° to the right and the left foot in 60° to the right, both legs straight
- turn the shoulders, trunk and pelvis to face the right, have both sides of the pelvis equally facing to the right
- inhale, turn back to the front, do on the left and come back to Samasthiti.



Virabhadra I

bending the knee to 90°



Vimānāsana

Learn to turn laterally. Learn to entirely rotate the back of the left leg from inside out, retaining the heel down. Vice-versa on the other side.

- a) bending the knee to 90°
- from *Samasthiti* follow technique a)
- exhale, keeping the left leg straight and firm, bend the right knee so the shin is at a right angle to the floor and the thigh is parallel to the floor.
- inhale, straighten the right leg, come up, turn both feet to the front and do on the other side.

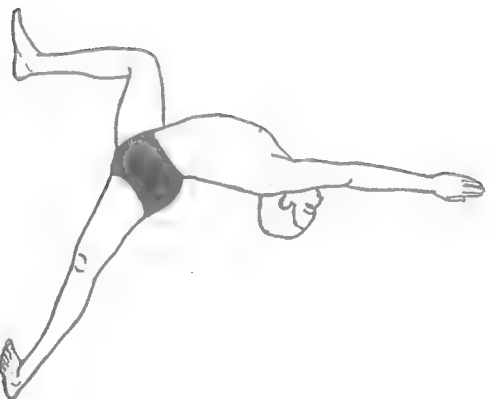
Learn to bend the knee to 90°, without allowing the trunk to lean to the front. Keep the trunk, from the buttocks to the head, perpendicular to the floor.

16. Vimānāsana

b) stretching the arms to the sides

This is a further variation of *Virabhadra I*, in which the arms are extended to the sides. This is known as *Vimānāsana*.

- follow techniques a) & b) of *Virabhadra I*
- inhale, keeping the right leg bent at a right angle, spread your arms to the sides in line with the shoulders.
- inhale, take the hands on the waist, straighten the leg, come up, turn to the front and do on the other side.



Virabhadrasana I

Learn to broaden the chest when the waist is turned.

- d) *Virabhadrasana I* – final pose
- from *Samasthi* go to *Uttitha Hasta Padāsana*.
 - extend the arms over the head, elbows straight, bring the palms together as in *Urdhva Namaskārasana*.
 - turn the right foot out 90° to the right, turn the left foot in 60° to the right
 - inhale and turn the shoulders, trunk and torso to the right
 - keeping the chest lifted, arms extended, exhale, bending the right knee to form a 90° angle.
 - keep the back leg straight and firm.
 - keeping the neck extended, take the head back and look up.
 - Inhale, raise the head, straighten the leg to come up, turn the trunk and both feet to face forward, then do on the other side.

Learn to maintain the proper turning of the waist while the arms are up. Normally, after lifting the arms the pelvis tilts towards the back leg.

Note: Practise each action separately. Reach the final stage (d) in two ways; firstly, by extending the arms up before bending the knees; secondly, to raise the arms up after bending the knee (b through c). If the chest shrinks in *Urdhva Namaskārasana* keep the hands in *Urdhva Hastāsana*.

These *āsanas* tone the leg-muscles, which helps when attempting the advanced standing *āsanas*, especially the balancing ones. One learns the sense of movement and mobility such as; extension, rotation and spreading of the spinal muscles away from the spine.

The full range of arm-movements remove the stiffness of the armpit, shoulders, shoulder-blades, thoracic ribs and neck.

These *āsanas* make one active, alert, attentive and mentally firm. They ignite the fire of will power.

PART 4

PART 4

17. *Vīkṣāsana*

18. *Ardha Chandrāsana*

19. *Virābhadrāsana* III

In this group of *āsanas* you learn to balance on one leg in the upright position, sideways position and horizontal position.

17. *Vīkṣāsana* – see PART 1 no 8

The next two standing *āsanas* work on balance, so it is helpful to repeat *Vīkṣāsana* now, to prepare the body and mind.

The knee position in *Vīkṣāsana* is utilised to understand the turning of the knee *in Ardha Chandrāsana*. The base intelligence of the thigh is recognised, since that is the key-point.

18. *Ardha Chandrāsana*.

- a) bending the knee
- b) going up bent elbow
- c) arm up

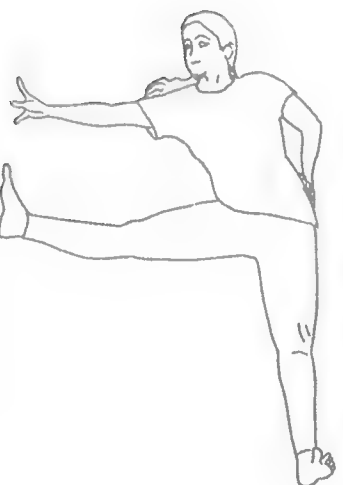


Ardha Chandrāsana
bending the knee

- a) bending the knee
- first follow the instructions for *Uttitha Trikoṇāsana*.
- bend the right knee, place the right hand on the floor about a foot in front of the right leg.
- bring the weight of the body forward, over the right foot and hand.



Ardha Chandrasana
going up bent elbow



Ardha Chandrasana
going up bent elbow



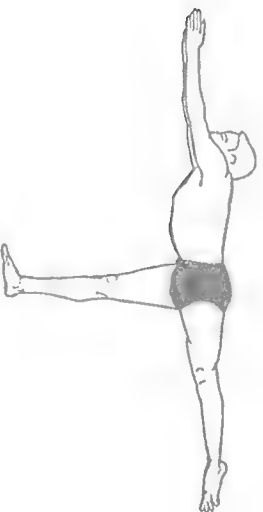
Ardha Chandrasana
arm up

- b) going up bent elbow
- exhale, place the left hand on the waist, elbow bent; extend the trunk further towards the head
- take the left foot slightly in towards the right leg
- raise the left leg up straight, so that the left leg is parallel to the floor, the right leg perpendicular to the floor
- come to *Uttitha Trikonasana* and then to *Uttitha Hasta Padāsana* and repeat a) and b) on the left side.

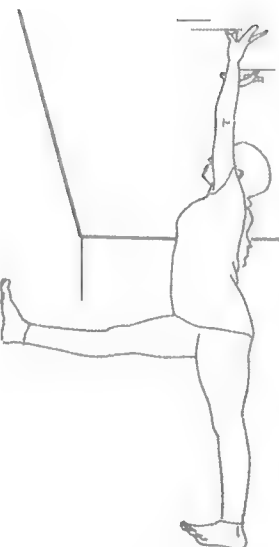
Learn to shift the weight of the body on the right hand and the right leg. Learn to lift the left leg and stretch the right leg simultaneously. Learn to synchronise these actions.

- c) arm up
- extend the left arm straight up, in line with the shoulder, the fingertips pointing toward the ceiling from position b).
- slowly turn the head to look at the hand.
- exhale, bend the right leg and lower the left foot to the ground; come to *Uttitha Trikonasana*.
- come up to *Uttitha Hasta Padāsana*.
- now repeat the steps on the other side.

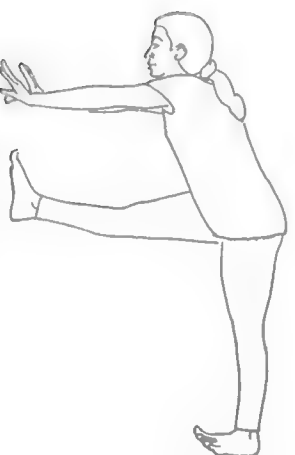
Learn to balance when the head and neck are turned up, do not allow the lifted leg to remain hanging downwards. While coming down place the back leg down with control.



Virabhadra I



Virabhadra II
fingertips touching the wall



Virabhadra III
fingertips on the ground

Note: In order to get the quickness in the movements and the sense of balance, do Ardha Chandrasana directly from Pârśva Hasta Pâdâsana balancing on the right leg and right hand. You can practise balancing standing against a wall, (back of the body against the wall).

19. Virabhadra I

- go to Virabhadra I, exhale and extend the trunk and arms forward over the right thigh.
- move the trunk towards the arms, straighten the right leg and lift the left leg up to be parallel with the floor.
- stretch the arms and trunk forward and stretch the left leg back. The right leg is straight, perpendicular to the floor.
- the entire body, arms, trunk and left leg are parallel to the floor and balanced on the perpendicular right leg.
- return by bending the right leg and lowering the left foot to the floor, raise the trunk up, you are now in Virabhadra I.
- do on the other side.
- straighten the right leg and return to Samasthi.

Learn the process of concentration whilst balancing. If the body wavers, the mind wavers and if the mind wavers, the body wavers.

Note: 1) If the body is heavy and therefore balancing is difficult, then do Virabhadra I with the finger tips touching the wall until you are firm in that position (pregnant women can follow this method). Then do away from the wall. One can practise lifting each leg alternately, in quick succession.

2) If lifting the leg is difficult then do with the fingertips on the ground, trunk parallel to the ground, head up and forward and practise lifting the leg straight up.

As far as balancing is concerned, here we advance a little further. The sense of balance as well as proper support to the body comes with proper extension of the spinal muscles. The foundation for balancing is already laid in *Vīkṣāsana*, usually learnt somewhere in the second or third week. *Vīkṣāsana* helps us to learn the next two *āsanas*.

In *Ardha Chandrāsana*, one learns to distribute the weight on one arm and leg, whereas in *Virābhadrāsana* III the whole body is held horizontally on one leg. These *āsanas* are introduced in the second and third month of our programme.

Ardha Chandrāsana tones the lower region of the spine, that is the lumbar, the sacrum and the nerves connected to the lower limbs. This *āsana* is particularly beneficial for women, especially as far as gynaecological problems are concerned. Women suffering from dysmenorrhoea and menorrhagia can do this *āsana* during menses, resting against the wall.

These *āsanas* help to remove sciatic, arthritic and rheumatic pains; they correct drooping shoulders and hunchback, expand the chest and increase endurance. For advanced students it is a matter of balance, for people needing to recover their health it will improve the breathing and stamina. Attention is sharpened with the demand to balance. In all these balancing *āsanas* the brain has to be attentive and the mind has to be alert.

Patañjali says, in III:1 of the *Yoga Sūtras*, *deśa bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā* – meaning, fixing the consciousness on one point or region is concentration (*dhāraṇā*).³ To concentrate on a particular area, demands disciplined training. In these *āsanas*, the body, mind and breath work together in unison. In order to balance, the attention must be drawn in deeper, with alertness and awareness.

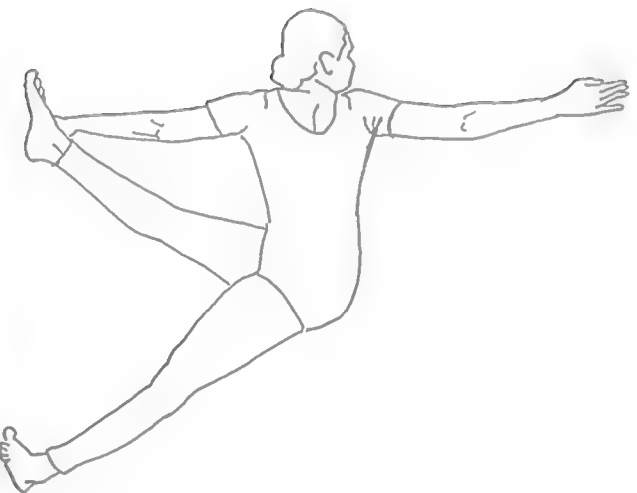
³ For further details refer to *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*.

PART 5

20. *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana*

21. *Parivṛtta Pāśvakoṇāsana*

22. *Parighāsana*



Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana

There one learns the art of concentration with total involvement. In these *āsanas*, the mental involvement is stronger compared to the earlier ones. One needs a sharp attention. One cannot do it casually.

A yoga practitioner needs harmony, balance, poise and power. These two *āsanas* develop these qualities, giving the sense of equilibrium.

PART 5

After getting the sense of direction of the '*Ardha Parivṛtta*' action, that is introduced in *Vīmānāsana* and *Vṛabhadhāsana* /, one learns to proceed further for the *Parivṛtta* action in the following two *āsanas*. The turning or twisting of the spine along with the abdomen in any *āsana* is called *Parivṛtta Kriyā*.

Parighāsana is an "assisting *āsana*." It determines the extension of the sides of the trunk, which helps to improve the *Parivṛtta* action. It is a preparatory *āsana* for *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana* and *Parivṛtta Pāśvakoṇāsana* as well as a parameter to measure the movement and to counter balance any error there may be in the performance of *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana* and *Parivṛtta Pāśvakoṇāsana*.

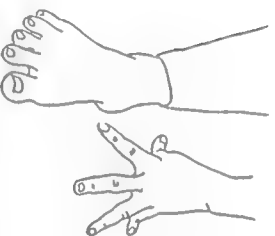
The sequence is important as here the practitioner moves from the basic to the intermediate level of the practice charted for beginners.

20. *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana*

- a) left hand outside right foot
- b) left hand inside right foot near the arch.
- c) left hand on ankle
- a) left hand outside right foot
- jump and go to *Uttitha Hasta Padāsana*.
- turn and go to *Pāśva Hasta Pādāsana*.



left hand outside right foot



left hand inside right foot, near the arch



left hand on ankle

- exhale, rotate the entire trunk, pelvis, abdomen, chest and head to the right so that the left arm extends over the right leg.
- exhale, place the left hand fingertips down on the floor on the outside of the right foot.
- rotate the trunk and extend the right arm up in line with the shoulder.
- inhale and come up to *Pārsva Hasta Pādāsana* and then to *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*.
- repeat the same on the left side.

Learn to balance having full extension of the spinal muscles and expansion of the chest.

- b) left hand inside right foot, near the arch.

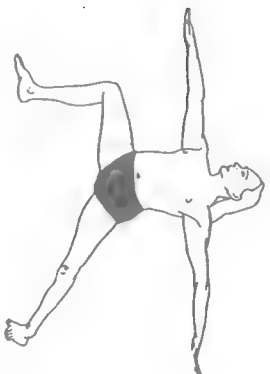
If the above technique is too difficult, an alternative is to place the right hand on the inside of the right foot, near the arch of the foot

Learn to get the sense of balance and the rotation of the spine maintaining the alignment of the trunk with the legs.

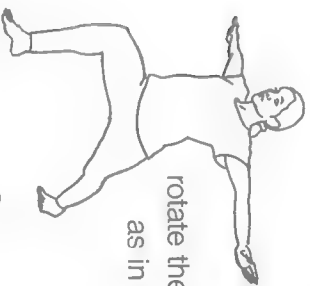
- c) left hand on ankle

A further alternative is to place the left hand on the ankle, if the palm cannot reach the floor.

Learn (in technique b & c) to maintain the buttock and head in one line. Do not allow the head to go past the line of the leg. In order to learn this alignment do near the wall. Keep the back to the wall. Follow the above technique. As you turn, put the top hand on the wall and the bottom hand as mentioned above.



right knee to 90° as in *Vṛabhadṛāsana* II



rotate the entire trunk
as in *Vimānāsana*



left elbow hooked
on the outside
of the right thigh



Parivṛtta Pārśvakoṇāsana

21. *Parivṛtta Pārśvakoṇāsana*

- from *Samasthii* jump to *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*.
- go to *Pārśva Hasta Pādāsana*.
- bend the right knee to 90° so the thigh is parallel to the floor as in *Vṛabhadṛāsana* II.
- exhale and rotate the entire trunk, pelvis, abdomen and chest to the right; be in *Vimānāsana*.
- bring the left side of the abdomen over the right thigh.
- bend the left elbow and hook it on the outside of the right thigh and then place the left-hand fingertips on the floor, outside the right foot
- extend the right arm straight up towards the ceiling, look up, then extend the arm over the head in line with the ear.
- to come up, release the hand from the floor, raise the trunk and come back to *Vimānāsana*, *Pārśva Hasta Pādāsana* and then to *Uttitha Hasta Pādāsana*. Now do on the other side.

Note: You can learn the following steps –

- 1) keeping the hand on the waist.
- 2) stretching the arm towards the ceiling.
- 3) finally, taking the arm over the head; similar to the explanation to *Uttitha Pārśvakoṇāsana*. The turning action and the exhalation done sharply should synchronise. Keep the abdomen soft with the exhalation. While attempting on the right side, the left side of the trunk should have mobility and while doing on the left side, the right should have the mobility. The mobility should be quick and sharp without losing the balance.

These āsanās create mobility in the spine by giving a lateral rotational movement, which we call turning or twisting. *Parivṛtta* means revolved, turned round.

**Parighāsana**

Basically, these āsanas increase the blood supply to the lower part of the spinal region and invigorate, stimulate and activate the liver, the kidneys, the spleen, the intestines and the pancreas. These āsanas are a must for the diabetic patient. They improve metabolism.

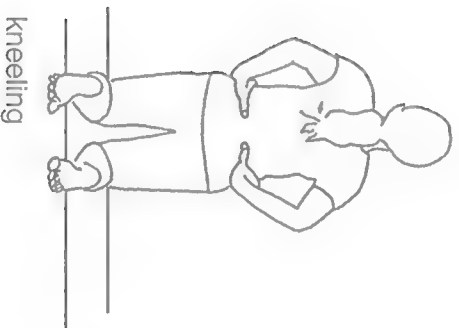
22. Parighāsana

- a) kneeling
- b) one leg to the side (bent)
- c) straightening arms and legs
- d) extending the trunk sideways

- a) kneeling
- kneel down on a blanket, keeping the hands on the waist
- shin bones pressing into the blanket, feet and toes pointing straight back.

Learn to press the shins, ankles and metatarsals firmly on the blanket

Note: This position of kneeling is to be learnt since it is required while doing Uṣṭrāsana (see PART 12) and later, some of the advance backward bending āsanas.

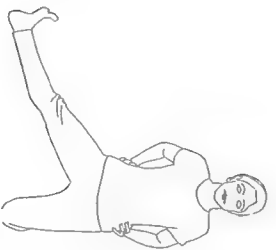


kneeling



one leg to the side (bent)

- b) one leg to the side (bent)
- lift the right leg, turn the right foot to the side and keep it bent at 90° like Virābhadrāsana II.
- keep the knee turning out,
- now, come back to position a) and do on the left



straightening leg



straightening arms



extending the trunk sideways



extended arm
in line with the ear

Learn in this position to tuck the buttocks in and keep the trunk straight.

- c) straightening arms and legs
- without disturbing the level of the buttocks, extend the right leg straight to the side, in line with the right hip, leg straight, kneecap tight
- extend the arms straight out to the sides at shoulder level.
- now, come back to position a) and do on the left.

Learn in this intermediate position to keep the shinbone, ankle and metatarsals of the bent knee pressed on the floor. Learn to open the chest with the arms spread.

- d) extending the trunk sideways
- come to position c).
- keep the left hand on the waist
- exhale, with the chest and abdomen facing forward, bend the trunk to the right leg side.
- place the right hand on the right shinbone.
- exhale, extend the left arm over the head in line with the left ear.
- go as far as you can to the right without losing the openness in the front of the chest.
- to come up take the left arm on the waist, lift the trunk and come up.
- now do on the other side.

Learn to rotate the trunk towards the ceiling as in *Uttitha Pāśvakoṇāsana*. As you go to the right, learn to keep your attention equally on the left and vice versa.

Parighāsana is an assisting *āsana*. It improves *Uththita Trikoṇāsana* and *Uththita Pārśvakoṇāsana*. *Parighāsana* extends the side flanks of the torso. It is introduced purposely for beginners so that they can avoid abdominal cramps, which may come from the twisting turning, rotating movements of the other *āsanas*, such as *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana* and *Parivṛtta Pārśvakoṇāsana*. Often, in the process of rotating, the floating ribs and false ribs get compressed. This is taken care of in *Parighāsana*.

Compare this *āsana* with *Bharadvājāsana* I (Part 9) and *Parivṛtta Jānu Śrīṣāsana* (see *Light on Yoga*), in which you turn the spine and abdomen laterally, avoiding compression. The lateral spinal movement helps to improve *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana* and *Parivṛtta Pārśvakoṇāsana*. It counter balances the lateral twisting extensions, with a lateral sloping and downward extension, without compressing the abdomen or losing the lateral extension and twist. The opening that occurs between the pelvis and floating ribs as well as on the sides of the entire rib cage brings improvement in the breathing process.

Let us see the next group of *āsanas*:

PART 6

23. *Pārśvōttānāsana*

24. *Prasārita Pādōttānāsana*

25. *Uttānāsana*

26. *Pādānguṣṭhāsana*

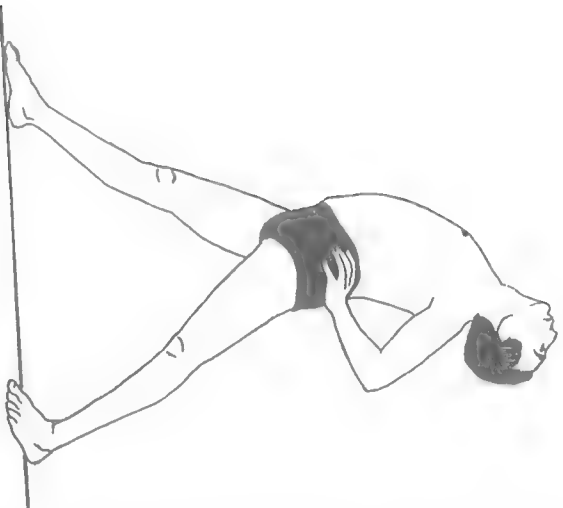
27. *Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*

PART 6

In this group of *āsanas* one learns to bend forward giving a forward extension to the spinal muscles. The forward extensions are known as *Paśchimā Pratana Sthiti*. One has to make the back concave in order to avoid compression of the spine, especially the spinal muscles and nerves and incorrect extension of the muscles.

Apart from concavity of the back in *Pārśvōttānāsana*, the arm and shoulder action improves the structure of the body.

In each *āsana* one first concaves the back and then the head is taken down. The emphasis on the concave back is to assist in bringing extension to the spine, as well as correcting the position of the spinal muscles.



Pāśvōttānāsana
standing/concave



Pāśvōttānāsana
hands on either side of the feet

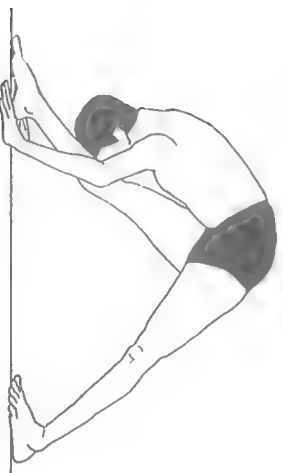
23. Pāśvōttānāsana

- a) concave back – standing/concave
 - b) head down
 - c) *Baddha Mani Bandha Pāśvōttānāsana* – holding the wrist at the back, head down
 - d) *Baddha Hastā Pāśvōttānāsana* – folded hands, head down
 - e) *Pāśchim Namaskāra* – head down
- (see the various methods of adjusting the arms before one learns to do the final movement).

- a) concave back – standing/concave
 - from *Samasthiti* go to *Uttithā Hastā Pādāsana* with legs 3' to 3' 6" apart
 - place the hands on the waist
 - go to *Pāśva Hastā Pādāsana* on the right with hands on the waist, turn the left foot further in, keeping the legs straight and steady, inhale and raise the spine, abdomen, chest, sternum and head; curve the neck and look up and back
 - inhale, bring the head to the centre.
 - exhale, stretch the entire trunk forward to be parallel to the floor.
 - release the hands from the waist and place the fingertips of the hands on either side of the right foot. See that both legs are straight, arms are straight and the pelvis parallel with the floor.
 - raise the head, concave the back and look up.
 - inhale and come up.
 - now repeat the same actions on the left side.

Note: If the hands are unable to reach the floor, then use bricks on either side of the leg and keep the palms on them.

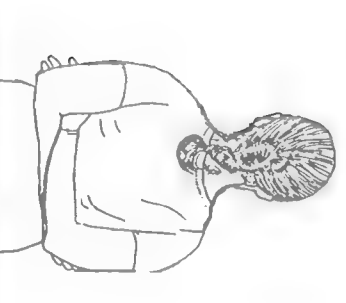
- b) head down
 - follow the technique of a) on the right side.
 - now exhale and take the trunk down so the abdomen comes towards the right thigh.
 - take the head to the shinbone.
 - inhale, lift the head and trunk and return to *Uttithā Hastā Pādāsana* with hands on the waist
 - now, do on the other side.



Pāśvōttānāsana
head down



Pāśvōttānāsana
Baddha Māṇi Bandha



Baddha Hasta position

Learn these movements breaking the actions in three steps by attempting once on the right and once on the left.

- 1) palms on the waist, turn the trunk to the side and head back
- 2) hands down and concave back
- 3) head down.

Learn to do the movements in continuity on the right side as well as the left side.

c) *Baddha Māṇi Bandha* (wrist) *Pāśvōttānāsana*

Holding the wrist at the back, head down. In order to do *Pāśchim Namaskārāsana* follow these steps -

- hold the right wrist with the left hand behind and follow all the above movements.
- now hold the left wrist with the right hand and repeat the movements.

d) *Baddha Hasta Pāśvōttānāsana* – folded arms

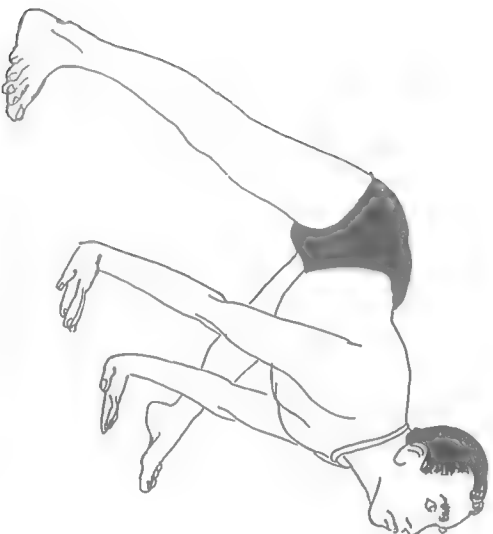
- bend the left arm to catch the right upper arm/elbow and bend the right arm to catch the left upper arm/elbow behind the back.
- now follow the rest of the procedure as already outlined.
- now catch the left upper arm/elbow with the right and the left with the right and complete the procedure.

a) *Pāśchim Namaskāra* – head down

- from *Samasthiti* do *Pāśchim Namaskārāsana* (see part 1).
- jump the legs 3 to 3' 6" apart
- turn the right foot 90° to the right
- lift the trunk, abdomen and chest and take the head to look up.



Pāśvōttānāsana
Pāśchim Nāmāskāra



Prasārita Pādōttānāsana
concave back

- bring the head to the straight position.
- exhale, extend the trunk and chest forward towards the right thigh, head to the shinbone.
- inhale, raise the trunk up to come up, turn both feet to the centre, now, do on the left and come back to *Samasthiti*.

Learn to develop insight by bringing inner attention while performing the āsana. Have a single link of attention though the movements are different

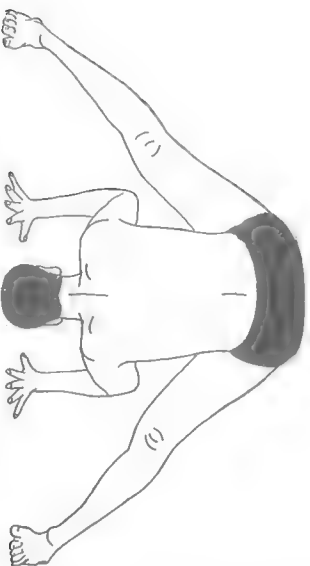
Note: All these movements of the arms are important for students affected with arthritis, rheumatism and so on.

Pāśvōttānāsana contains several movements, which maintain mobility of the following joints – the neck, arms, shoulders, wrists, arm pits, ankles, toes, knees, pelvis, thighs and spine. Every joint participates and is involved in the action. It is an ‘action-packed’ āsana. Yet, it has a capacity to calm down the brain and cool down the nerves so that the mind is free from tension.

24. Prasārita Pādōttānāsana

- concave back
- head down

- concave back
- stand in *Samasthiti*, with the hands on the waist.
- inhale, jump and spread the legs 4ft apart.
- exhale, extend the trunk forward from the hips, stretching the spine.
- release the hands and place the fingertips on the floor, shoulder width apart, in line with the legs.
- inhale, stretch the spine further.
- lift the chest and sternum, lengthen the neck, take the head up and look up.



Prasāritā Pādottanāsana
head down

Learn to spread the legs apart without allowing the feet to slide and slip off. Learn to press the outer edges of the feet, like the application of the brake to the vehicle. Learn to concave the back using the arms and legs.

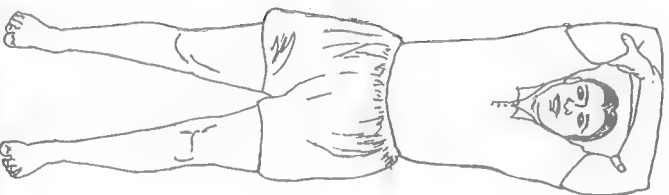
b) head down

- keeping the chest open, exhale, bend the elbows, take the head to the floor, rest the crown of the head on the floor.
- place the hands to be in line with the feet
- to come up, first lift the head, look up, then lift the chest and come up from the waist.
- jump the feet together.

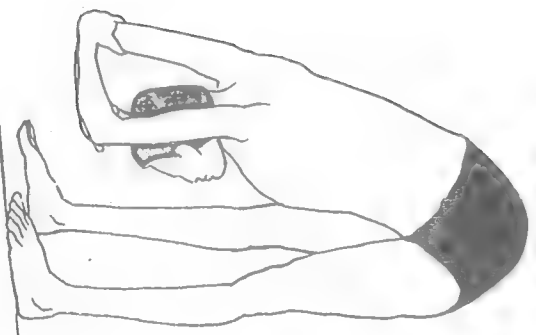
Learn these two actions as separate stages. Look at the area on the floor where you are going to keep the crown of the head.

Note: If it is difficult to bend down while keeping the palms and the head in line with the feet, take the hands further forward and keep the head in line with the palms.

The first stage with emphasis on the concave back gives more spinal extension. For back problems, the sequence of concavity for extension before taking the head down is beneficial. It is especially beneficial for women during menstruation and pregnancy. Resting the head allows for recovery.



Baddha Hasta Tāḍāsana



*Baddha Hasta
Uttānāsana*

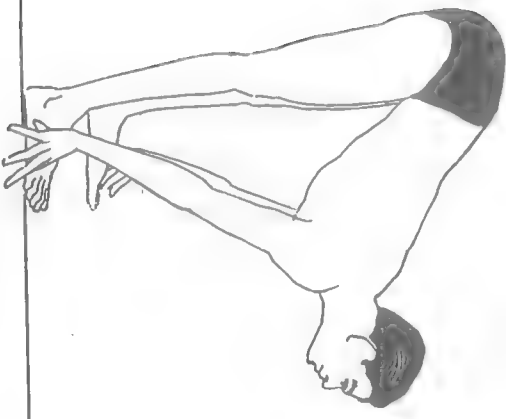
25. *Uttānāsana*

- a) *Baddha Hasta Tāḍāsana* – legs apart, folded arms
- b) *Baddha Hasta Uttānāsana*
- c) *Uttānāsana* – legs apart, arms down
 - i) concave back
 - ii) head down
- d) *Uttānāsana* – feet together
 - i) concave back
 - ii) head down

- a) *Baddha Hasta Tāḍāsana*
 - stand in *Samasthiti*, step the feet 1 to 1' 6" apart
 - feet are parallel and point forward, legs straight, knees straight
 - fold the arms, first clasping the left elbow with the right hand, and then the left hand clasping the right elbow, inhale and extend the folded arms above the head in line with the ears, lift and stretch the whole body up.
 - release the arms down and change the grip.

Learn to lengthen the sides of the trunk with a firm grip on the elbows.

- b) *Baddha Hasta Uttānāsana*
 - do *Baddha Hasta Tāḍāsana*.
 - exhale, stretch the trunk forward and down.
 - keep the legs straight, trunk, arms, elbows extend towards the floor.
 - Inhale, lift the trunk, come up and release the arms and step the feet together.
 - now change the arm position and repeat.



Uttānāsana

legs apart, arms down, concave back

Uttānāsana
legs apart
arms down
head down



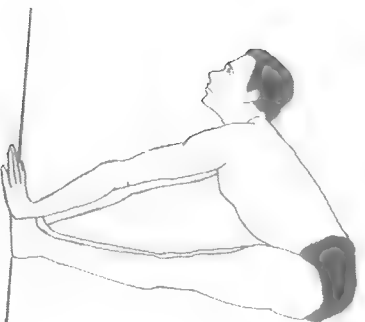
Learn to extend the trunk downwards. Release the trunk downwards from the sides of the chest and the buttocks. Do not hold the diaphragm tight.

- c) *Uttānāsana* – legs apart, arms down
- i) concave back
- stand in *Samasthiti* and step the feet 1 to 1' 6" apart.
 - exhale, extend the trunk forward and down, place the fingertips on the floor in line with the ankle bone.
 - keeping the arms and legs straight, inhale and concave the back, lift the head and look up.

Learn to make the back concave in such a way that the spinal muscles spread to the sides of the trunk and dip in the muscles.

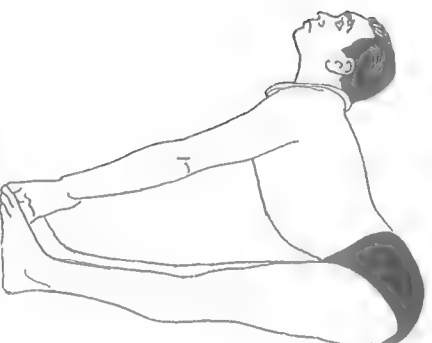
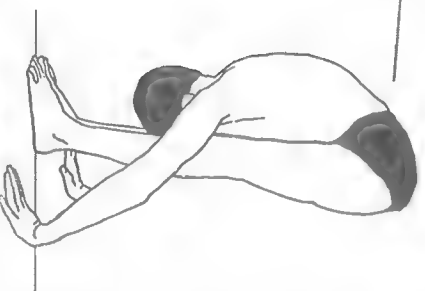
- ii) head down
- exhale, take the trunk down, flexing the elbows out to the sides.
 - lengthening the neck take the head towards the shin bones.
 - inhale, straighten the arms, concave the back and come to *Samasthiti*.

Note: One can grip the ankles with the palms and lengthen the trunk downwards in order to get downward extension of the spine.



Uttānāsana
feet together

Uttānāsana
feet together
head down



Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana
concave back

d) *Uttānāsana* – feet together

i) concave back

- stand in *Samasthiti*.
- exhale, stretch the spine forward, lengthening the waist.
- place the finger tips on the floor under the shoulders.
- keep the elbows straight.
- inhale, lift the chest, raise the head, concave the back and look up.

ii) head down

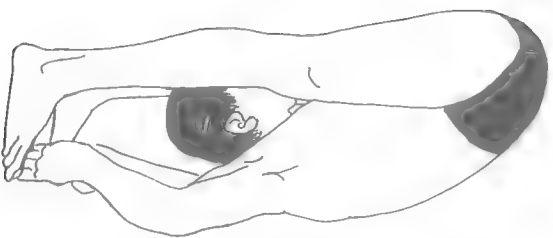
- exhale, bending the elbows take the head down, trunk towards the thighs, keeping the waist long.
- inhale, lift the chest and concave the back.
- come up to *Samasthiti*.

Learn to extend the trunk downwards, along with the exhalation.

26. *Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana*

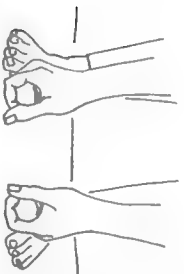
- concave back
- head down

- concave back
 - from *Samasthiti* step the feet 1ft apart
 - go to *Uttānāsana* without disturbing the feet
 - clasp the big toe of both feet with the thumb and first two fingers of both hands.
 - keep the arms straight
 - inhale, concave the back by lengthening the spine, raise the chest, lengthen the neck and look up.



Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana

head down



clasping the big toes



Adho Mukha Śvānāsana

place the hands



Learn to create space between the armpits and leg pits at the groins so that the sagging organs of the abdomen get lifted and get supported by the spine.

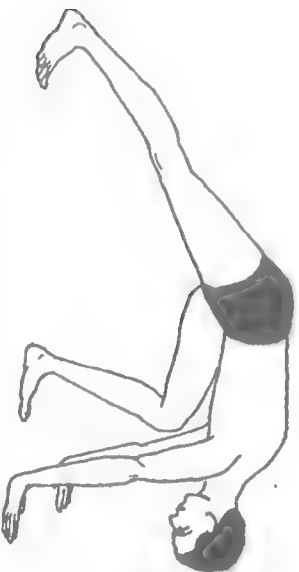
- b) head down
- exhale, bending the elbows out to the sides, take the head and trunk down, head towards the shin bones.
- Inhale, concave the back, release the grip on the big toes, come up to *Samasthiti*.

Learn to bend further forward with the grip on the toes.

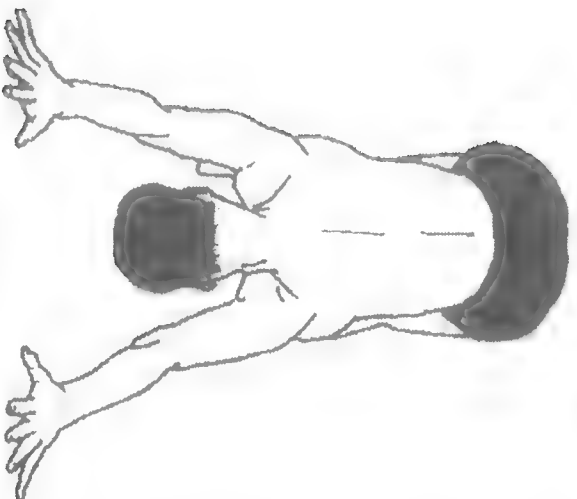
27. *Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*

- from *Uttānāsana*, place the hands down on the floor.
- step back one leg at a time so there is a distance of 3 to 4ft between the hands and the feet
- the hands are shoulder width apart.
- the feet in line with the palms.
- open the palms, spread the fingers and press them evenly on the floor.
- exhale and stretch the arms, keeping the elbows straight, lengthen the spine up towards the hips.
- keep the legs straight, back of the knees open, lift the thighs up and push them back, lift the hips so there is space to take the trunk in towards the thighs.
- stretching the calf muscles, take the heels towards the floor.

Learn to stretch from the hands to the buttocks and from the heels to the buttocks.



step back one leg at a time



open the palms,
spread the fingers

Note: If the heels are slippery, creating unsteadiness, keep the back of the heel against the wall. Similarly, if the palms are slippery then keep the thumbs and index fingers against the wall. The palms remain slightly turned out.

Forward extension is always done with a concave back. These questions always arise “Why do I get backache in forward bending?”, “Why does the doctor say to avoid forward extensions?” The reason behind the backaches in the first place is because no one does the concave movement correctly. Just bending the back, without concavity, is dangerous. First, one needs to lengthen the spine and create space between the vertebral joints. This way injury is avoided since there is no compression.

This group of standing *āsanas* brings a forward extension to the spine. They remove fatigue caused by the other standing *āsanas*. In all these *āsanas* the spine is above the heart. The heart gravitates in this prone position. This is a kind of resting position for the heart. In its normal vertical position, when we are standing upright, the heart is exerted. The pressure on the ventricles increases in this upright position and they become enlarged. When the heart is in an inverted position, as it is when doing *Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*, the exertion on the ventricles is reduced.

The idol in the temple is placed on a support. This support is called a ‘*peetha*’ – (raised platform). In these *āsanas* the *peetha* is formed for the heart. In all these *āsanas* the tension on the heart is lessened. One recovers from physical and mental fatigue. The strain on the heart is reduced and breathlessness alleviated. The body craves these *āsanas* when it is tired or fatigued. One can further take rest by placing the head on a stool, a chair, a bolster or by taking the support of the ropes.

These *āsanas* tone the nervous system, improve the blood circulation towards the brain and at the same time check the rush of blood towards the brain. Therefore, one feels cool in the brain. Those who suffer from high blood pressure, palpitation, depression and swinging moods will find a great relief.

When you feel nauseated, giddy or blacked out, switch over to these *āsanas* immediately. In these *āsanas* the abdominal organs are massaged. The digestion is improved and excretion becomes easier, hence, those who get constipated will find a great relief, since the peristaltic movement of the intestines improves. These *āsanas* tone the liver and the spleen. One feels lightness in the body after doing these *āsanas*.

The various movements in *Pārsvōttānāsana* remove the stiffness in the pelvis, the legs, the hips, the neck, the wrists, the shoulders and the elbows.

These *āsanas* lay a good foundation for *Śrīṣāsana*. One can derive the effective feeling of *Śrīṣāsana* by doing these *āsanas*. One becomes familiar with the inverted position and the inverted view obtained in these *āsanas*. The fear complex is reduced and one gets prepared physiologically and psychologically to do the inversions, especially beginners who are discouraged at first when they are in inverted *āsanas*.

These *āsanas* help to improve the sitting forward extensions.

Here ends the standing *āsanas*.

PART 7

- 28. *Danḍāsana*
- 29. *Ūrdhva Hasta Danḍāsana*
- 30. *Pādāṅguṣṭha Danḍāsana*
- 31. *Baddha Koṇāsana*
- 32. *Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana*
- 33. *Pādāṅguṣṭha Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana*
- 34. *Svastikāsana*
- 35. *Parvatāsana – in Svastikāsana*
- 36. *Virāsana*
- 37. *Parvatāsana – in Virāsana*
- 38. *Gomukhāsana*



Danḍāsana

Chapter II

SITTING ĀSAMAS

Now, let us switch over to the sitting *āsanas*. The *āsanas* in sitting posture are known as *Upaviṣṭha Sthiti*.

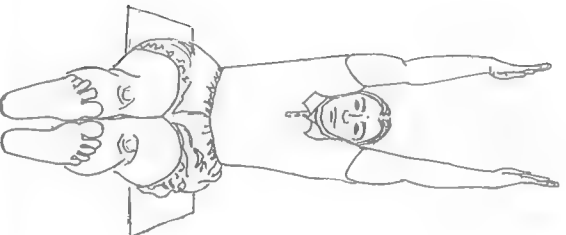
Very often people find it difficult to squat on their legs and sit down on the floor, since everyone sits in chairs these days. The time has come to learn to sit down on the floor since either the knees or ankles, hip joints, or the spine begins to give trouble.

Here are the sitting *āsanas* in which one learns the correct placement of the legs in various positions in order to bring mobility and flexibility.

PART 7

28. *Danḍāsana*

- have a blanket on the floor.
- sit upright on the blanket, with the legs stretched straight out in front of you.
- thighs together, feet together, toes pointing straight towards the ceiling.
- sit exactly on the buttock bones, distributing the weight evenly on both buttocks



Urdhva Hasta Daṇḍāsana

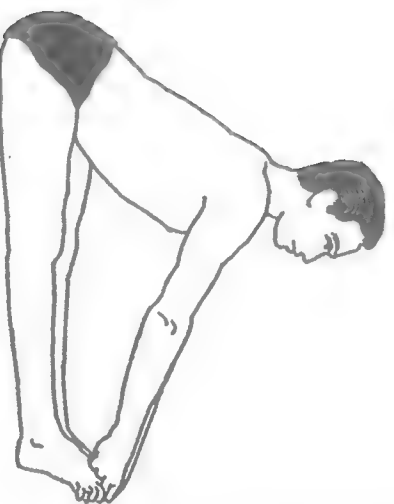
- press the back of the knees towards the floor.
- place the hands by the side of the hips with the arms straight, roll the shoulder bone back
- lift the spine, abdomen and trunk
- lift the sternum towards the head.
- the neck and head are straight, look ahead at eye level.

Learn to lift the spine up and move the sacrum and dorsal into the body. To maintain their concavity, use the hands to activate the spine. Learn to adjust the buttock bones.

29. Urdhva Hasta Daṇḍāsana – arms upwards

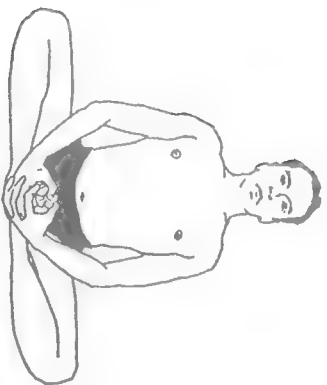
- sit in *Daṇḍāsana* as above.
- inhale, raise the arms up, so the upper arm comes in line with the ears.
- elbows are straight, palms open and facing each other, fingers extended straight up.

Learn to take the arms up without losing the concavity of the sacrum. Learn to open the diaphragm and concave the kidney area without closing the chest muscles.



Padāṅguṣṭha Daṇḍāsana

- **30. Padāṅguṣṭha Daṇḍāsana** – holding the toes with concave back
- exhale, extend the arms forward and clasp the big toes with the thumb and first two fingers.
- keep the elbows straight
- concave the back, moving the dorsal spine into the body, lift the sternum, keep the collar bones wide, extend the neck, take the head up and look back
- release the hold and come back to *Daṇḍāsana*.

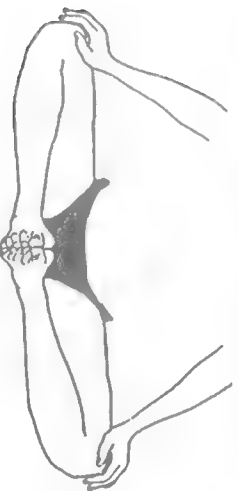


Baddha Koṇāsana



Baddha Koṇāsana

hands by the sides of the hips



Baddha Koṇāsana

palms on the thighs, near the knees

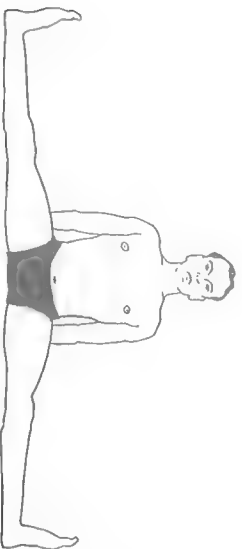
Learn to make the lower back concave. By pressing the back of the legs down, lift the trunk up.

Note: In all the forward extensions this intermediate stage is very essential. Before bending forward one has to make the spine concave. The forward extensions have to be done along with the concave and extended spine. Later, in this book we will refer to this intermediate stage (madhya-sthiti) as "Ūrdhva Mukha" This specific nomenclature is for the sake of convenience so that the instructions become easier.

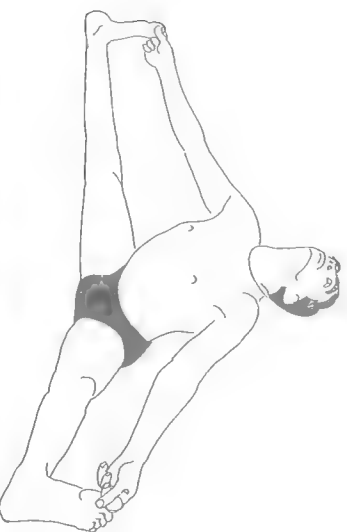
31. Baddha Koṇāsana

- sit in *Danḍāsana*.
- bend the legs one at a time, taking the knees out and the heels towards the perineum, press the soles of the feet together. Later with practice one can take both the feet at the same time.
- take the heels as close as possible towards perineum.
- widen the knees away from the hips and down towards the floor.
- interlock the fingers and clasp around the feet.
- sit straight, spine erect, lift the chest and roll the shoulder bones back.
- after staying in this *āsana* observing the widening of the legs and the lifting of the trunk.
- release the hands and stretch the legs out to *Danḍāsana*.

Learn to open the groins and loosen the hip joints.



Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana



Pādāṅguṣṭha Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana

concave back

Note: If the groins are stiff, then place the hands by the sides of the buttocks/hips and press them towards the floor in order to open the groins. Or put the palms on the thighs, nearer to the knees and press them to the floor.

32. Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana

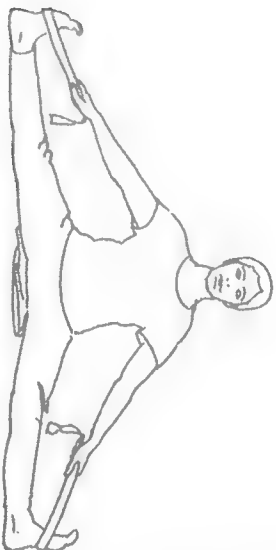
- sit in *Danḍāsana*, take one leg at a time out to the side, widen the distance between the legs. As one progresses, spread both legs at the same time.
- make sure that the middle of the thigh, middle of the knee and centre of the foot exactly face the ceiling.
- keep the back of the thighs, knees and calf muscles pressing down.
- place the hands on either side of the hips.
- lift the spine, lift the chest, move the shoulder-blades into the back

Learn to widen the legs and to keep the centre of the back of the thighs, calves and heels on the ground.

Note: While spreading the legs apart, take care that you sit exactly on the buttock bones, in order to avoid a "catch" in the hip joint.

33. Pādāṅguṣṭha Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana – concave back

- from above position.
- exhale, bend forward, catch the big toes between the thumb and forefingers of each hand.
- press the thighs down to the floor and extend the inner heels.
- raise the sides of the trunk up.
- move the dorsal spine into the body between the shoulder-blades and further lift the chest,



Upaviṣṭha Kōṇāsana
belt to each foot

- inhale, raise the sternum and look up.
- exhale, release the hands, sit upright and then come to *Danḍāsana*.

Learn to lift and concave the spine.

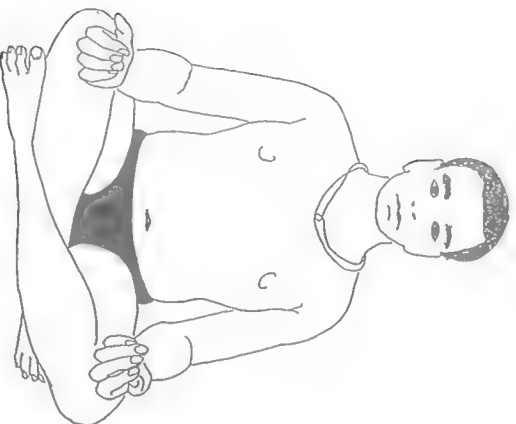
Note: This variation can be done with the help of a belt to each foot for those who are unable to reach.

34. Svastikāsana

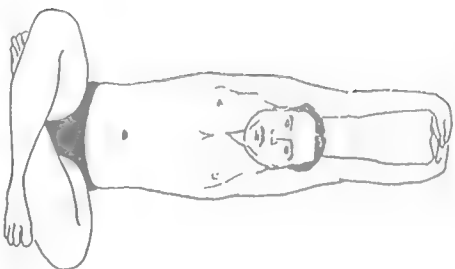
- sit in *Danḍāsana*, bend the right knee and take the right foot under the left thigh.
- now, bend the left knee and bring the left foot under the right thigh.
- this is a simple cross-leg position, where the shin bones cross over in line with the centre of the body and each foot is placed under the opposite thigh.
- sit upright, trunk lifted, chest lifted, head straight.
- now, uncross the legs, go to *Danḍāsana* and change the cross-leg position by bringing the left foot under the right thigh and right foot under the left thigh.
- uncross the legs and go to *Danḍāsana*.

Learn to cross and uncross the legs changing their position alternately. Often one is confused which leg was crossed previously against the other.

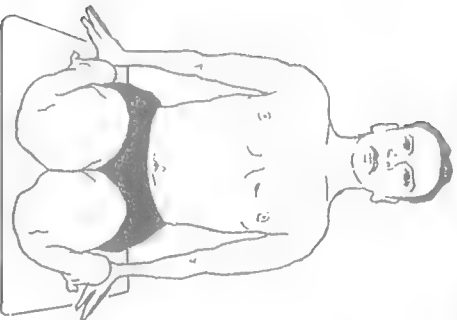
Note: This is an essential āsana whilst doing prāṇāyāma.



Svastikāsana

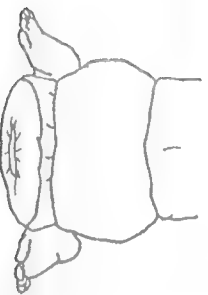


Parvatāsana – in Svastikāsana



Virāsana

sitting with the
help of bolster



35. Parvatāsana – in Svastikāsana

- sit in *Svastikāsana*.
- interlock the fingers, (see PART 1) rotate the palms out, straighten the arms and raise the arms above the head, upper arms in line with the ears.
- keeping the elbows locked, stretch the arms upwards towards the ceiling.
- lower the arms down, change the interlock of the fingers, take the arms up again and repeat.
- change the cross legs and repeat with both interlocking of the fingers.
- release the arms, release the legs and come back to *Dandāsana*.

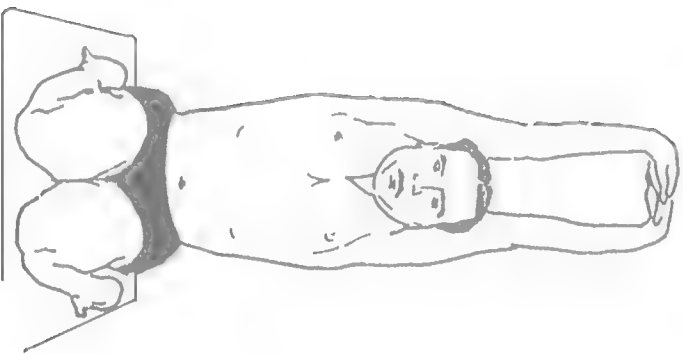
Learn to lift the trunk against the crossing of the legs.

Note: Change the cross legs, first bend the right leg and place the left leg below the right leg. Later bend the left leg and place the right leg below the left.

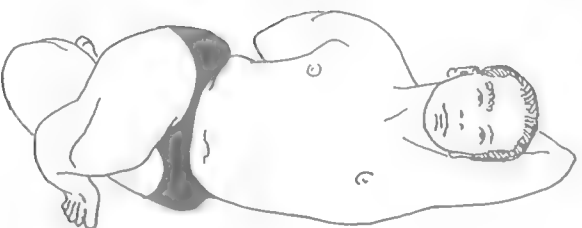
36. Virāsana

- kneel on a blanket, thighs parallel, knees together.
- have the shin bones apart, toes pointing straight back.
- lower the buttocks to sit between the feet (if the buttocks do not touch the floor, sit on a blanket).
- the trunk is upright, chest lifted, head straight
- extend the arms forward so the palms rest on the knees.

Learn to lift the sacrum and coccygeal region of the spine where often one finds the immobility.



**Parvatāsana
in Virāsana**



Gomukhāsana

Note: Many people find it difficult to sit in Virāsana due to problems in the joints of the legs. Therefore, various methods of sitting are used with the help of blankets, pillows, bolsters etc.

37. Parvatāsana – in Virāsana

- sit in *Virāsana* – see above.
- interlock the hands in front of you and rotate the hands so that the palms face away from you (see PART 1).
- with the elbows straight, extend the arms above the head, upper arms in line with the ears, palms of the hands facing the ceiling.
- lower the arms down and change the interlock of the fingers and repeat
- release the legs and come back to *Danḍāsana*.

Learn to open the armpit chest and move the shoulder-blades in, without over-concaving the lumbar.

Note: If interlocking the fingers narrows the chest, then keep the hands like *Urdhva Hastāsana*.

38. Gomukhāsana

- sit in *Danḍāsana*, raise the hips and bend the left knee, taking the left foot under the right buttock, toes pointing back; sit on this foot
- bend the right knee and take the right thigh over the left one, taking the foot back to be next to the left one, toes pointing back
- trunk upright.
- take the right arm behind and bend the elbow and fix it between the shoulder-blades.
- raising the left arm over the head, bend the elbow so that the left hand comes behind the nape of the neck and clasps the right hand.

***Gomukhāsana***

- keep the head and neck straight
- release the arms, release the legs, sit again in *Danḍāsana*, now do with the right leg first and the right arm up.

Learn to cross the legs properly and bring compactness in the leg position.

Note: 1) A clue to remember – if the left leg is below, the left arm is up and if the right leg is below then the right arm is up.

2) The simple version of sitting position in this āsana is to cross the thighs on each other so that one knee remains on the top of the other and the feet remain on the sides of the buttocks.

After knowing the art of standing, one has to know the art of sitting. *Danḍāsana* is the basic *āsana* for the sitting *āsanas*, just as *Samasthiti* is for the standing *āsanas*. In this *āsana*, the legs are not bearing any weight, so one learns to stretch the legs in a proper way. This is helpful for those with knee or ankle problems. While the legs are spread straight out in front, one has a great chance to see the knees. One can clearly see which knee is fixed in and which one bulges out; which turns out and which turns in. Watching all these defects, one can learn to adjust the whole leg to bring alignment.

The student learns how to lift both sides of the spine. *Danḍāsana* gives a symmetrical extension to both sides of the spine, maintaining alignment. It makes the spine firm and straight by giving an exact fulcrum, so that one sits precisely on the point of the buttock bones. It makes one aware of the spinal drop at various areas, such as coccyx, sacrum, lumbar, dorsal and the cervical portions of the spine. As long as one is able to manage sitting somehow, one does not pay attention to this collapse going on. However, Lord Patañjali and Lord Kṛṣṇa do

not permit us to sit with a collapsed trunk for meditation. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in Bhagavad Gītā
Samam kāyaśirognīvam dhārayannachalam sthirah

“Hold the body, head and neck erect, immovably and steadily.”

Therefore, for the practitioners of yoga it becomes essential to know the defects and to correct them. Normally, one sits on the flesh of the buttocks. The body flops onto the flesh. In *Dandāsana*, the bones of the buttocks are traced from within and the body is carefully positioned and centralised from that point. The position of the spine is established from this base. And the ensuing work of the body in the *āsanas* is centralised.

Alignment in the legs is achieved with the correct positioning of the ankles, calves and thighs and by opening the bottom of the feet, grounding the shin and thigh bones and tightening of the knees.

In *Vīrāsana*, *Baddha Koṇāsana*, *Gomukhāsana* and *Svastikāsana*, the knees are bent in different directions to train the ligaments. Wear and tear is faster in the knees because the body weight is constantly carried on them during walking and standing. Even while sitting in a chair, though the weight is taken off the legs, the restricted blood circulation and the gravitational pull cause sagging and sinking. These *āsanas* not only maintain mobility in the joints but also remove stored lactic acid from the joints and take off the strain.

The working on the knees in *Vīrāsana*, *Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana* and *Baddha Koṇāsana* act as pain relievers for diseases such as gout, rheumatic pain, flat foot, calcaneal spurs and varicose veins. These various movements of the knees can bring flexibility and give relief. Cramps in the legs are commonly found among middle-aged people. The practice of *Gomukhāsana* and *Vīrāsana* is the remedy. *Baddha Koṇāsana* is a boon for those suffering from urinary disorders, kidney infection, swelling in the prostate glands, heaviness of the testicles and sciatica. *Baddha Koṇāsana* and *Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana* keep the pelvic organs healthy, checking irregular and excessive bleeding during menstrual periods and stimulating the ovaries. All these *āsanas*, except *Gomukhāsana*, are suitable for pregnant women, for a healthy pregnancy and easy delivery. Any one suffering from vomiting, nausea and heaviness, especially after meals, will benefit by doing these *āsanas* immediately after eating.

The arm-work in *Parvatāsana* and *Gomukhāsana* not only lubricates the arm and the shoulder joints, but also develops the chest muscles. Therefore, for those who suffer from asthma, arthritis and rheumatism, the arm-work is emphasised. In *Parvatāsana*, one learns to lift the spine upward against gravity. This postpones the ageing of the spine. An extension is brought to the pectoral and pelvic regions; it can be performed in most of the sitting postures.

Vīrāsana, *Baddha Koṇāsana* and *Svastikāsana* are helpful during the practice of *prāṇāyāma*. All these sitting *āsanas* counter-balance the exertion of standing *āsanas*.

After the sitting *āsanas*, let us switch over to the forward extensions of the spine – the *Paschimā Pratana Sthiti*.

PART 8

39. *Paśchimōttānāsana*

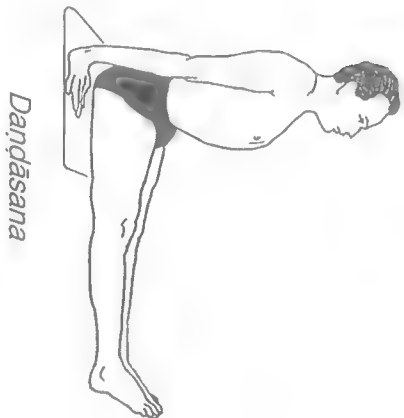
40. *Jānu Śīrṣāsana*

41. *Tīanga Mukhaikapāda*

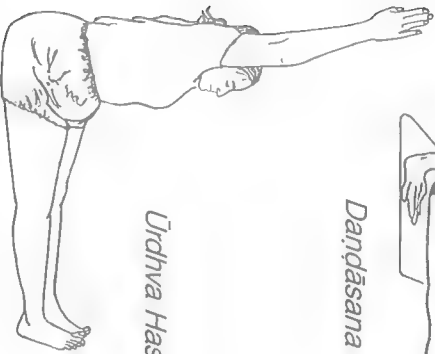
Paśchimōttānāsana

42. *Marīchyāsana*

43. *Upaviṣṭha Kojāsana*



Ūrdhva Hasta Daṇḍāsana



Chapter III

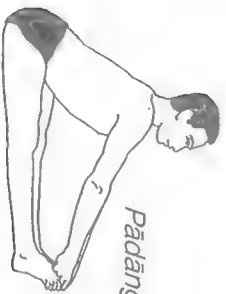
FORWARD EXTENSION

Knowing the correct way of sitting and the various movements of the knees, the forward extension becomes easier. *Daṇḍāsana* is the basic posture for the sitting and forward extensions. All the forward extensions in the syllabus begin and end in *Daṇḍāsana*. The various positions of the legs along with various movements of the knees, enable the spinal muscles to extend forward, creating a natural traction. Every forward extension is done creating concavity of the spine and bringing a soft rotation in the abdominal muscles. There is an extension of the abdomen rather than its compression. In order to create evenness in the extension of the spine, one begins the forward extension with *Paśchimōttānāsana*.

PART 8

39. *Paśchimōttānāsana*

- follow the instructions for *Daṇḍāsana*, *Ūrdhva Hasta Daṇḍāsana* and *Padānguṣṭha Daṇḍāsana* (see PART 7, No's. 28, 29 & 30).
- lift the chest and concave the back (this is the same as for *Daṇḍāsana*).
- exhale, extend the trunk forward, bending the elbows up and out to the sides to further lengthen the sides of the trunk



Pādāṅguṣṭhā Daṇḍāsana

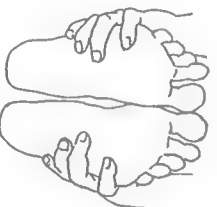


Paśchimōttānāsana

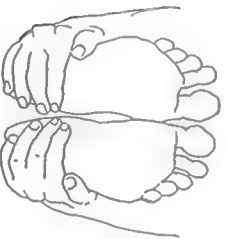


Reach the big toes

sides of the
soles of the feet



reach the heels



clasp the fingers
around the feet



- take the chin towards the shin bones.
- stay in this position.
- to come up, raise the chest and return to *Pādāṅguṣṭhā Daṇḍāsana* and then *Daṇḍāsana*.

Learn in all these forward extensions, to keep the neck muscles soft and the head passive. Do not cave in the chest. Extend the sides of the trunk in order to bend further.

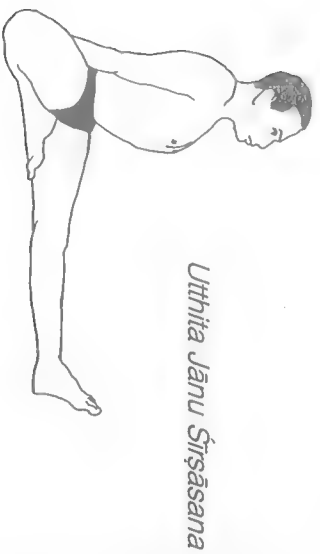
Note: First reach the big toes, then the sides of the soles of the feet then the heels. Later, clasp the fingers around the feet, reverse the clasped palms.

40. *Jānu Śrīṣāsana*

- Uttitha Jānu Śrīṣāsana*
- Ūrdhva Hasta Jānu Śrīṣāsana*
- Ūrdhva Mukha Jānu Śrīṣāsana* – concave back
- Jānu Śrīṣāsana*

- Uttitha Jānu Śrīṣāsana*
 - from *Daṇḍāsana*, bend the right knee, taking the knee out and back to the right
 - place the right foot so the big toe touches the inside of the left thigh.
 - keep the left leg straight, toes pointing towards the ceiling.

Learn to distribute the weight on both the buttocks evenly though the legs are in a dissimilar position.



Uthita Jānu Śīrṣāsana



*Urdhva Hasta
Jānu Śīrṣāsana*



Urdhva Mukha Jānu Śīrṣāsana
concave back

*Note: In order to go to the final position of any āsana, one begins with an initial stage of that āsana; for example Jānu Śīrṣāsana, Bharadvājāsana have a beginning stage of a basic sitting position with a specific placement of the legs. In Uṣṭrāsana it is kneeling on the knees. In Sālamba Śīrṣāsana it is the positioning of the hands etc. These first initial stages are commonly called Sthiti.
For forward extensions, in order to have a clear identification, we call the sitting stage “Uthita” and the intermediate stage “Urdhva Mukha”*

b) *Urdhva Hasta Jānu Śīrṣāsana*

- inhale, extend the arms up in line with the ears, tuck in the shoulder-blades.
- keep both sides of the pelvis in line.

Learn to extend the sides of the trunk evenly on both sides.
Lift the bent leg side trunk with extra effort.

c) *Urdhva Mukha Jānu Śīrṣāsana* – concave back

- exhale, extend the sides of the trunk forward to catch hold of the big toe of the left foot
(*With further practice you can catch your wrist beyond the outstretched foot*).
- raise the head up and lift the spine, make the back concave.

Learn to extend the lumbar trunk by making the dorsal spine concave.



Jānu Śīrṣāsana

d) *Jānu Śīrṣāsana*

- from the above, exhale, widen the elbows out to the sides, extend the trunk further forward.
- rest your forehead on the left shinbone.
- inhale, release the hands, raise the chest and come up to *Uttithia Jānu Śīrṣāsana*, sitting position, release the right leg and sit in *Danḍāsana*.
- now repeat on the other side.

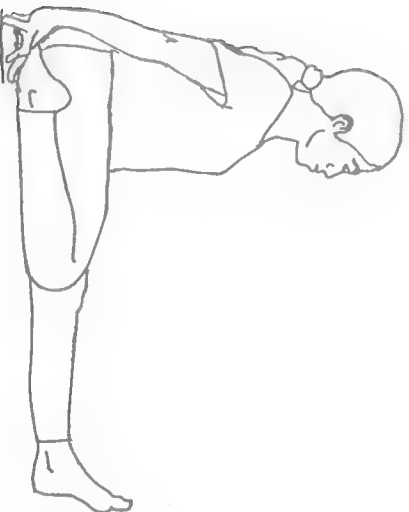
Learn to make the back concave and bend forward with the same extension without forming a dome of the back.

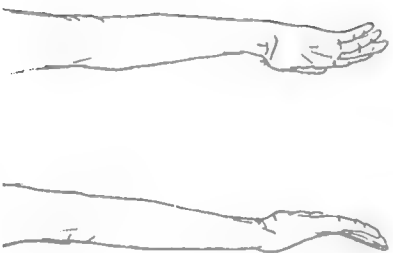
Note: When taking the head down on the extended leg, you need to stretch the opposite side of the trunk more.

41. *Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Paśchimōttānāsana*

- Uttithia Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Paśchimōttānāsana*
- Ūrdhva Hasta Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Paśchimōttānāsana*
- Ūrdhva Mukha Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Paśchimōttānāsana* – concave
- Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Paśchimōttānāsana*

- Uttithia Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Paśchimōttānāsana*
 - from *Danḍāsana* bend the right leg and place it along the side of the right hip with the sole of the foot facing up; this is similar to the position of the thigh, shin and foot in *Virāsana* on one side (do not sit on the foot).
 - make sure both thighs are parallel to each other.
 - keep the left leg extended straight along the floor.
 - have the palms on the sides of the hips.

Uttithia Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda
Paśchimōttānāsana



Urdhva Hasta



Trianga Mukhaikapāda Paschimōttānāsana



folded blanket under the buttock

Learn to sit on the bent leg side as you sit more on the extended side of the leg.

- b) *Urdhva Hasta Trianga Mukhaikapāda Paschimōttānāsana*
 - inhale, extend the arms up towards the ceiling.

- c) *Urdhva Mukha Trianga Mukhaikapāda Paschimōttānāsana*
 - exhale, extend the trunk forward, clasp hold of the left foot with both hands or clasp the wrists beyond the foot
 - inhale, raise the sides of the chest up, lengthening the waist and look up.

Learn to level both the sides evenly.

- d) *Trianga Mukhaikapāda Paschimōttānāsana*
 - exhale, take the trunk forward to rest the abdomen, chest and chin along the left leg.
 - inhale, raise the head and chest to come up.
 - release the right leg and sit in *Dandāsana*.
 - now repeat on the other side.

Learn to keep the trunk in the centre, avoid the tilt.

Note: If the buttocks are tilting, then place a folded blanket under the buttock of the extended leg to bring it level with the other buttock.



Uttitha Marichyāsana




Urdhva Hasta

42. Marichyāsana I

- a) *Uttitha Marichyāsana*
- b) *Urdhva Hasta Marichyāsana*
- c) *Urdhva Mukha Marichyāsana*
- d) *Adho Mukha Marichyāsana*
- e) *Marichyāsana*

- a) *Uttitha Marichyāsana*
- from *Danḍāsana*, bend the right knee, so the knee faces up towards the ceiling; the right heel is in line with the right buttock, toes pointing forward.
- keep the arms in *Danḍāsana*.

Learn to level the spinal muscles on both the sides evenly 
spreading them horizontally.

Note: The name is the same for *Marichyāsana* – standing and twisting

- b) *Urdhva Hasta Marichyāsana*
- inhale, extend the arms straight towards the ceiling.

Learn to keep the pit of the groin on the bent leg side down.

- c) *Urdhva Mukha Marichyāsana*
- exhale, take the trunk forward along the inside of the right thigh.
- the inside of the right thigh and the right side trunk should touch each other.
- clasp hold of the left foot with both hands.
- inhale, raise the head upward and make the back concave.



Adho Mukha Marichyāsana



catching behind the back



Marichyāsana I

Learn to extend the sides of the trunk evenly.

d) *Adho Mukha Marichyāsana*

- exhale, extending the abdomen over the left thigh, take the head towards the shin and rest the forehead.
- make sure that the right knee does not drop out
- inhale, release the foot, raise the chest and come up.
- now repeat on the other side by following the sequential steps a), b), c) and d).

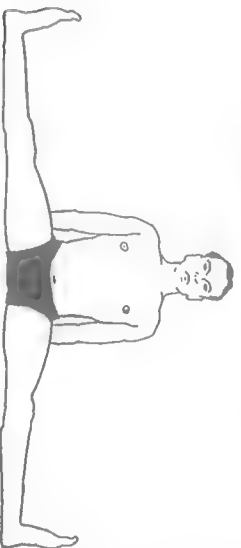
e) *Marichyāsana I*

This is the classical *āsana*

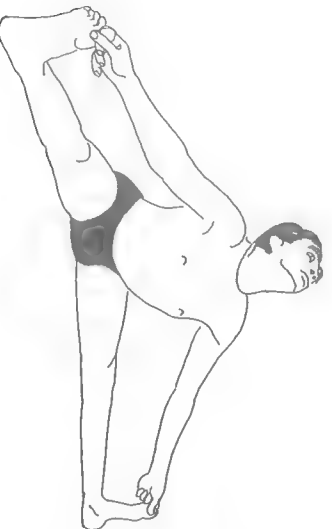
- follow as above.
- instead of catching the left foot, take the right arm behind by taking it around the right shin bone and thigh.
- turning the shoulder slightly to the left, swing the left arm behind the back to catch hold of the right hand.
- turn the entire trunk to face forward.
- exhale, concave the back, take the chin towards the left shin and rest the forehead.
- repeat on the other side.

Learn to grip the entwined arms firmly while bending forward. Do not loosen the grip and do not allow the bent leg to tilt outside.

Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana



Danḍāsana, go to Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana.



Pādānguṣṭha Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana



Adho Mukha Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana

43. Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana

- a) *Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana*
 - from *Danḍāsana*, go to *Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana*.
- b) *Ūrdhva Hasta Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana*
 - keeping the legs extended, lift the spine and raise the arms above the head, upper arms in line with the ears.

Learn to come exactly on the buttock bones.

- c) *Pādānguṣṭha Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana*
 - see the technique in PART 7, page no 58.
- d) *Adho Mukha Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana*
 - exhale, lengthen the trunk, take the head down.
 - inhale, raise the head, chest, and trunk and come up, bring the legs together and return to *Danḍāsana*.

Note: With practice you can increase the distance between the feet. If you find it difficult to bend forward whilst holding the toes, then stretch the arms forward and go down.

The bending of the knees in various positions can be practised separately to get the flexion and lubrication of the knees.

As one gets sufficient mobility in the knees while doing the sitting *āsanas*, it is the time to proceed towards forward extension of the spine. The forward bending can be improved by

giving emphasis to the practice of *Parśvottānāsana*, *Uttānāsana*, *Prasāritā Pāda Uttānāsana*, *Padānguṣṭhāsana* and *Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*. The forward extension can be improved further by alternating each forward extending āsana with *Paschimōtānāsana*.

The *Uttitha*, *Urdhva Hasta* and *Urdhva Mukha* stages of all the forward extensions, can be practised separately, so that the movements and actions can be analysed and co-ordinated properly. These stages help the practitioners to feel both sides of the body and enables them to know which side is active and which is dull; which side is stiffer and which is more flexible; which side the muscles are shortened and shrunk and which side elongated and extended. One develops the sensitivity and intelligence to make these comparisons.

These *āsanas* basically bring the brain and the heart to a restful state. They stop the inner agitation by soothing the nerves and calming the mind. These *āsanas* soothe the brain, creating a cooling sensation, while at the same time they stimulate the digestive system, tone the abdominal organs and keep them free from sluggishness. It is essential for those who suffer from acidity, flatulence, vomiting and any digestive problems to have a regular practice of these *āsanas*. In these situations the final position of each forward extension is beneficial.

In the concave back movement the spine is elongated and dullness is removed. Those who suffer with back pain, whilst bending forward, find relief. All these concave back movements give relief to those who get cramps, lower abdominal pain and suffer from heavy bleeding during menstruation.

These *āsanas* improve the blood circulation in the pelvic region and help the adrenal glands, gonads and ovaries to function in a healthy way.

Women can do all these *āsanas* during menstruation to keep themselves free from menstrual problems and regularise the menstrual flow.

Those who suffer from high blood pressure, hypertension, anxiety, short temper, restlessness, insomnia, head-ache, migraine, myopia and glaucoma of the eyes, anaemia, fatigue, weakness and low fever will be benefited by doing these *āsanas* in their final position.

In order to derive the required effects one should adopt the following method. In all these *āsanas* if the fingers or palms do not reach the feet then put a strap around the foot/feet and hold. If the head does not reach the leg, put a folded blanket or a bolster/pillow and rest the head/forehead on it. Even if the practitioner is supple, one should rest the head on an elevated support for all the above mentioned problems.

The forward extension tones the liver, spleen and pancreas and activates the kidneys. *Jānu Śīrṣāsana* and *Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana* check the enlargement of the prostate glands. *Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Pāśchimōttānāsana* helps those who suffer with dropped arches, flat feet, sprain and stiffness in the ankles, locked knees and swelling in the legs. *Mañchryāsana* works on the shoulders and the armpits as one entwines the arms behind. *Pāśchimōttānāsana* massages the heart, rests and refreshes the mind, removes exertion and increases endurance.

According to our syllabus, *Pāśchimōttānāsana* should be taught first before the other forward extensions in order to bring a symmetrical extension on both sides of the spinal muscles. It is an intensive and advanced forward extension so it is also done as a concluding forward extension. Evenness in the spine is achieved after the other 'single-side' extensions have been done, such as *Jānu Śīrṣāsana*. The brain and heart are brought to a restful state and the nerves are soothed.

PART 9

44. *Bharadvājāsana I*

45. *Bharadvājāsana II*

46. *Bharadvājāsana on a chair*



Bharadvājāsana I

without holding

Chapter IV

LATERAL EXTENSION

This part of the course deals with the lateral extension, which is normally called the twisting action of the spine. This kind of rotation of the spine is called *Parivṛtta* action and the āsanās from this category are known as *Parivṛtta Sthiti*. The basic action of *Parivṛtta* (rotation) is first learnt in *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana* and *Parivṛtta Pāśvakoṇāsana*. However, the following twistings are chosen for beginners to learn the lateral extension easily.

PART 9

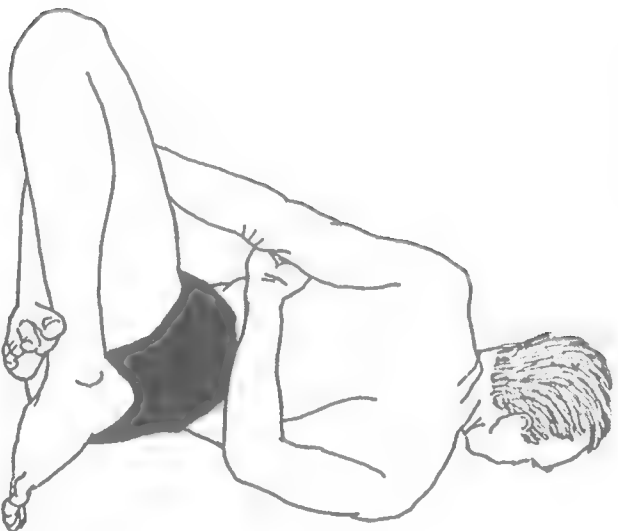
44. *Bharadvājāsana I*

a) without holding

b) holding

a) without holding

- sit in *Daṇḍāsana*, fold both the legs and place the feet to your left, with the left ankle over the right foot.

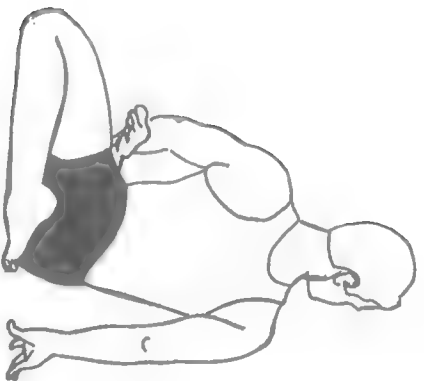


Bharadvajāsana I – holding

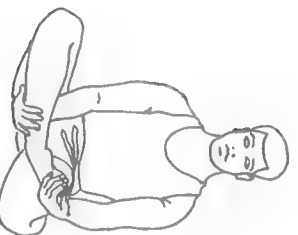
- place the left palm on the outside of the right thigh and the right fingertips on the floor behind the left buttock.
- inhale, lift the trunk and the chest, exhale and turn to the right.
- keep the sternum lifted, move the left shoulder blade into the back and lift under the left breast.
- exhale, turn back to the centre, release the legs and repeat on the left side.
- b) holding
- again, bend the knees to the left (see above) and place the left palm on the outside of the right thigh, near the knee.
- exhale and take the right arm, with bent elbow around the back to clasp the left arm above the elbow, from behind.
- lift the trunk, turn to face to the right.
- exhale, release the arms, return to the front and then release the legs to *Danḍāsana*.
- repeat on the other side.

Learn to turn the spine laterally before attempting to clasp.
Pay attention to the fact that the turn is always to the opposite side that the legs are placed on.

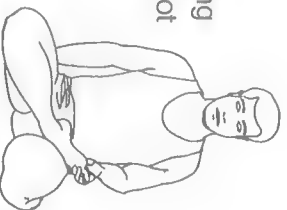
Note: The other way of learning is, after clasping the left upper with the right palm, to place the left palm on the outside of the right thigh and vice versa while doing on the other side. If you find the buttocks are uneven, while turning on the right, place a folded blanket under the right buttock. While turning on the left, place the blanket under the left buttock.



Bharadvājāsana II
without holding



placing
the foot



Bharadvājāsana II
holding



45. Bharadvājāsana II

- a) without holding
- b) holding.

Note: Here the position of the legs is a combination of Virāsana and Padmāsana.

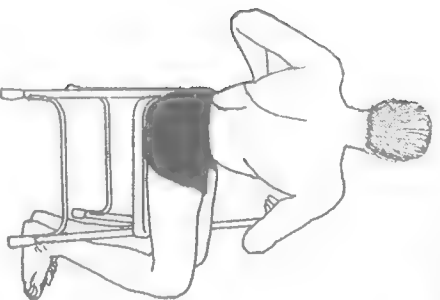
- a) without holding
 - from *Danḍāsana*, bend the left leg to *Virāsana* position.
 - now, clasp the underside of the right foot, bend the right knee out to the right, place the leg as in *Padmāsana*, bringing the right foot to rest on the top of the left thigh, so the heel is near the abdomen.
 - take the left hand to the outside of the right thigh and take the right hand to the floor behind the left buttock, exhale and turn to the right.
 - return to the centre, release the legs and the arms and stretch the legs in *Danḍāsana*.
 - repeat on the other side.

Learn to keep the legs in their respective positions before you turn the spine laterally. The *Padmāsana* foot should not slip.

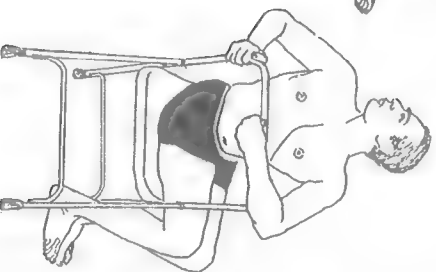
- b) holding.
 - as above a), this time take the right hand around the back to clasp the toes of the right foot from behind.
 - take the left hand to the outside of the right thigh.
 - keeping the trunk lifting, exhale and turn to the right
 - keep the shoulder-blades in, both sides of the chest equally facing the right
 - exhale, return to the front, release the legs and sit in *Danḍāsana*.
 - repeat on the other side.



strap to the
foot to hold



Bharadvājāsana
on a chair



Learn to align the spinal joints without allowing the spine to tilt backwards. The hand going around the back should make one aware of the upright position of the trunk.

Note: When performing the lateral rotations, lift the spine first and then turn the abdomen and the chest and finally the head; with the arms in the final positions, moving the shoulder-blades into the back will help the rotation. If the fingers do not reach the toes, put a strap or a napkin around the forefoot and hold it.

46. **Bharadvājāsana – on a chair**

- sit on a chair sideways with your right shoulder next to the back of the chair.
- have the thighs and feet parallel, slightly apart.
- sit erect, look straight ahead.
- inhale, raising the trunk, turn the chest to the right.
- hold the back-rest of the chair.
- keep the trunk lifted, shoulder-blades into the back and shoulder bones rolling back.
- lift the sternum, moving the spine in between the shoulder-blades.
- exhale, turn the head to look over the right shoulder.
- exhale, release the hands and face forward.
- now sit on the chair facing the opposite direction so the left shoulder is next to the back of the chair.

Learn to bring mobility in the sacrum and align the chest to be parallel to the backrest of the chair.

Note: 1) People who do sedentary jobs and/or suffer from backache or cannot sit on the floor will gain great benefit from performing the āsana in this way.
2) Those who suffer from catch in the back or neck should follow the positions explained in 44a) and 46 so they find relief.

After the forward extensions in PART 8, we have come to the lateral extensions of the spine. To get the freedom in the spine for rotation, one should give emphasis to the practice of *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana* and *Parivṛtta Pāśvakoṇāsana*, which may be regarded as the foundation for the lateral rotation in these āsanās. Anatomical movement is introduced progressively as the spine becomes more and more flexible.

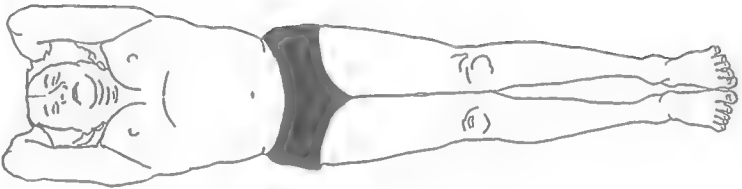
Bharadvājāsana I is a basic lateral rotational āsana. It is a simple āsana in which the spine extends and turns without creating any abdominal compression. Therefore, women menstruating and even pregnant women can do this āsana, especially *Bharadvājāsana I a)* to remove any pain and heaviness in the lower spine. In the later stages of pregnancy, women will find the variation on a chair helpful to perform for the same benefits. *Bharadvājāsana I & II* give lateral extensions, especially to the dorsal and lumbar regions of the spine.

Those who get backache due to weakness in the muscles and slipped disk, find great relief. The arm and shoulder work prevents and cures arthritis and rheumatism in their respective areas. In *Bharadvājāsana I* the arm is held from behind and in *Bharadvājāsana II* the foot is clasped from behind, this brings an integration in the action of clasping whilst turning.

Those who get pain and cramps in the back, neck and shoulders after their work as well as from travelling will benefit from these āsanās. The lateral extensions, which are called “turning and twisting movements,” are essential for everyone, since the muscle fibres of the spine and the back begin to become hard and dry with the ageing process.

PART 10

- 47. *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana*
- 48. *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*
- 49. *Eka Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana*
- 50. *Parśvaika Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana*
- 51. *Ardha Halāsana*
- 52. *Halāsana*
- 53. *Kaṇṭhapīḍāsana*
- 54. *Supta Koṇāsana*
- 55. *Pārśva Halāsana*

***Sālamba Śīrṣāsana***

Chapter V

INVERSIONS

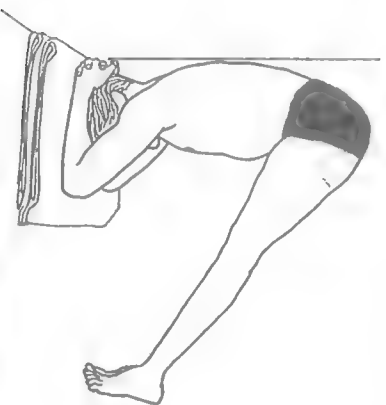
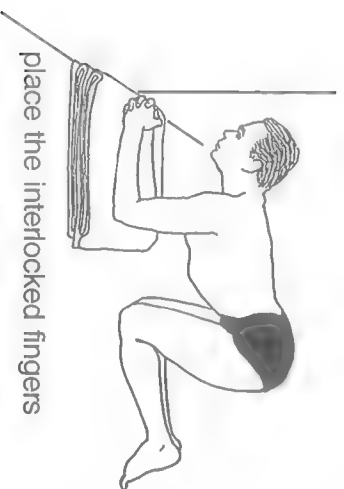
The *āsanas* in the inverted positions are known as *Vīpaṇīa Sthiti*.

The standing *āsanas* and the lateral extensions prepare the musculo-skeletal structure of the body to learn the inversions, such as *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana* and *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*. The standing and sitting forward extensions prepare one physically and mentally so that adverse effects can be avoided, such as high blood pressure, head ache, neck pain, tension in the eyes, vomiting sensation, heaviness in the head, sudden rush of blood towards the head and the psychological fear caused by faulty performance.

The preparation for *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* and *Halāsana* is important so the spine and organic body get lifted without any tension being created on the neck muscles or nerves.

This part deals with inverted *āsanas*. One begins with *Ardha Halāsana* (half *Halāsana*), to learn to bear the weight of the body on the shoulders and neck. Later, one learns to go to *Halāsana*. *Halāsana* gives the sense of balance for *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*. Therefore, one has to note the sequence of learning as below.

1) *Ardha Halāsana*, 2) *Halāsana*, 3) *Eka Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana*, 4) *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*. When *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* and *Halāsana* along with variations are consolidated, one begins to learn 5) *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana*.



Ardha Śīrṣāsana

lift the shoulders and lift the knees

During the course, one first learns *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* and then *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana*. But while practising the sequence reverses. One always performs *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana* first and follows up with *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*. However, *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* and its variations may be practised on their own.

For a beginner, these *āsanas* are taught halfway, resting the feet on the stool, ledge or wall.

PART 10

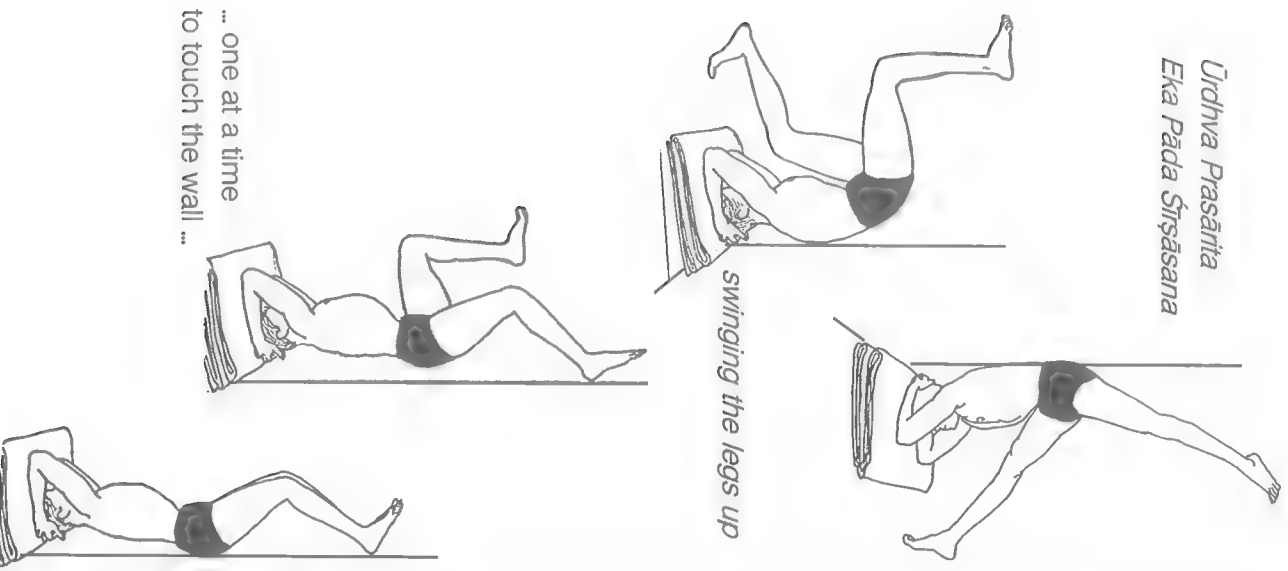
47. *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana*

- Ardha Śīrṣāsana*
- Ūrdhva Prasārita Eka Pāda Śīrṣāsana*
- Sālamba Śīrṣāsana*

a) *Ardha Śīrṣāsana*

- place a folded blanket on the floor, against a wall.
- kneel down in front of the blanket, interlock the fingers of your hands, without contracting the palms.
- place the interlocked fingers against the wall with the thumbs up and the little fingers down.
- keep the forearms down and elbows in line with the width of the shoulders.
- place the crown of the head in the centre of the 'cup' formed by the palms of the hands (*Sthiti*).
- press the wrists down, lift the shoulders and lift the knees so the legs are straight.
- keep lifting the shoulders without resting the dorsal spine against the wall.
- bend the knees, rest in *Adho Mukha Vīrāsana*.

*Urdhva Prasārita
Eka Pāda Śīrṣāsana*



Learn to consolidate this position by lifting the shoulders and spine as well as the legs, from heels to thighs, upward towards the buttocks. The leg should become light and the spine should be firm.

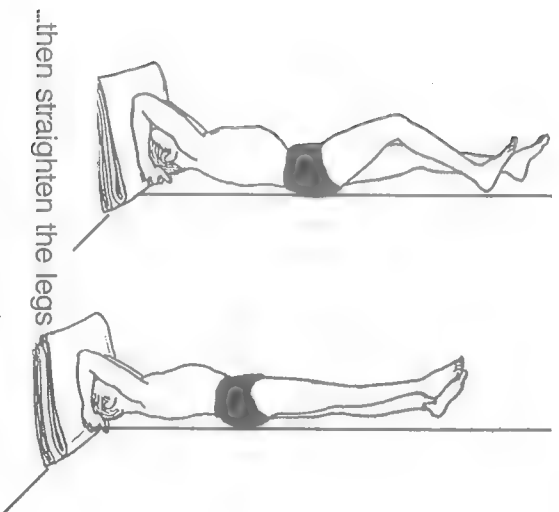
b) *Urdhva Prasārita Eka Pāda Śīrṣāsana*

- be in *Ardha Śīrṣāsana*.
- keep the toes of the right foot down.
- exhale, lift the left leg straight up in the air towards the ceiling.
- do not drop the shoulders.
- do not move the elbows out
- keep both the knees straight.
- do not let the weight of the body fall on to the toes of the right foot
- exhale, bring the left foot down.
- keep the toes of the left foot down and lift the right leg.
- come back to *Ardha Śīrṣāsana*.
- rest in *Adho Mukha Vīrāsana* for few seconds.

Learn to be out of fear and gear up towards the final position. Learn to shift the weight of the body from the legs to the trunk

c) *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana*

- follow the above instructions.
- now swing the legs up, one at a time to touch the wall, then straighten the legs.
- the whole body is now perpendicular to the floor.
- keep the spine straight, and shoulders lifted.
- stay for a minimum of one minute in the beginning, breathing evenly, looking straight ahead.
- later extend the duration of the *āsana* from three to five minutes.



Preparation



- flex the knees and lower them to the ground. Do not bang the knees on the floor.
- rest in *Adho Mukha Vīrāsana*, for a few seconds before standing up.

Learn to keep the legs together, back of the heels touching the wall and the buttocks away from the wall without protruding the abdomen.

Note: 1) Preparation for *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana* – sit in *Dhanḍāsana* with feet touching the wall. Mark where the buttocks touch the floor. Keep the blanket on that line. Do *Ardha Śīrṣāsana* so you face the wall. Climb up the wall so that the feet and the legs are parallel to the floor. Though the feet are on the wall, learn to lift the spine up independently without falling. This position is called *Urdhva Dhanḍāsana*.

2) In case you are unable to go to the *āsana* by swinging the legs up, then do *Urdhva Prasārita Eka Pāda Śīrṣāsana* against the wall. Now ask someone to lift the already lifted leg to the wall while you take the other leg up against the wall. Once you are established against the wall you do not need assistance. In order to come down ask the assistant to hold one leg against the wall while you descend the other leg to the ground. One should lift the leg up, alternating the leg.

3) Sometimes, one should devote time to practise the action of swinging the legs. If the jump is short of length, the legs come down. Therefore, learn to have a high jump. However, do not drop your spine and shoulders, which may injure the neck.

Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana

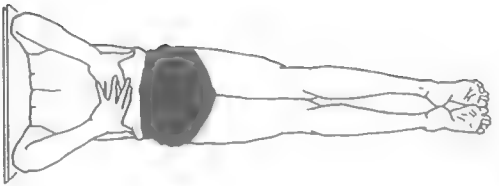
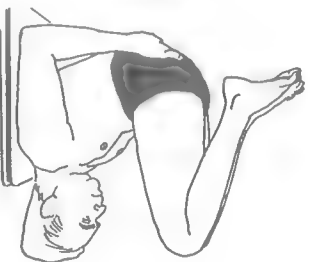


lie on your back

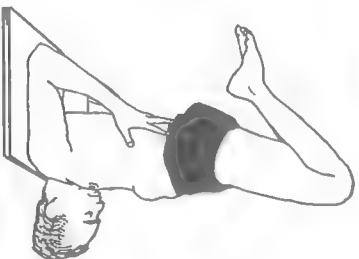


bend your knees towards your chest

swing the legs
above the head



support the back
with the palms, elbows on the floor



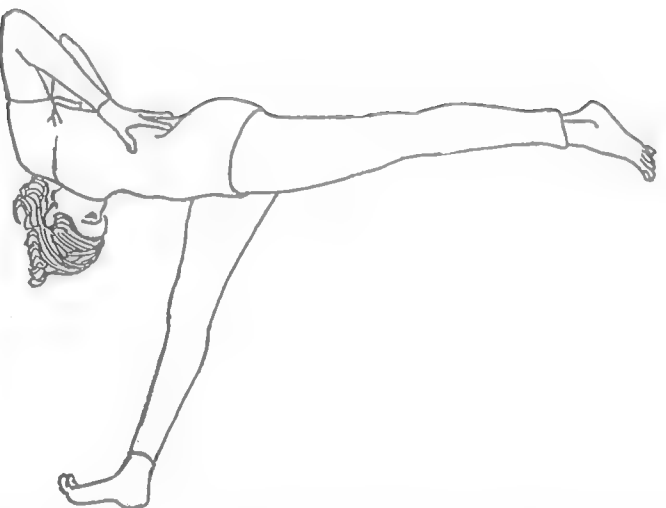
raise the hips further

48. Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana

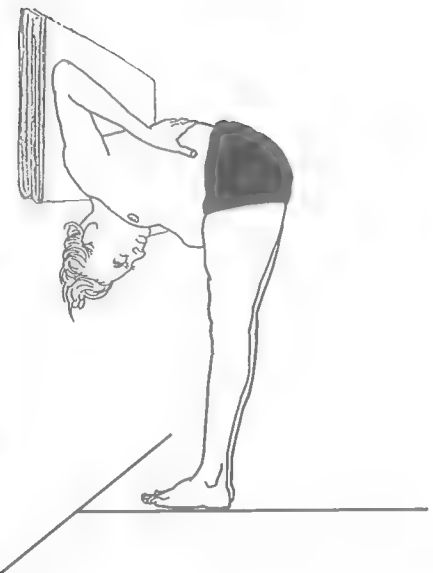
- lie on your back with your shoulders on a spread blanket and head on the floor.
- have the arms straight by the sides, elbows straight, hands extending towards the feet.
- roll the shoulder bones back and down, the shoulders should be away from the head.
- bend your knees towards the chest.
- now, press the hands down and swing the legs above the head,
- raise the hips and trunk up perpendicularly, the chest comes to touch the chin.
- support the back with the palms of the hands, pressing the upper arms down.
- raise the hips further.
- straighten the legs.
- stay in this position for a minute in the beginning with even breathing. Later, increase the duration from three to five minutes.
- exhale, release the hands and gradually slide down.

Note: 1) Often people complain of neck pain or choking which is either due to fear or lack of proper lift in Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana. In that case, fold extra blankets for the shoulders so that the head remains lower than the shoulders. However, the shoulders, upper arms and elbows should remain in one level on the piled blankets.

2) Preparation for Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana with the support of the wall – Lie down on your back with bent legs and be very close to the wall. Put the feet on the wall. Press the bottom of the feet against the wall. Lift the buttocks and back up. Go closer to the wall. Support the back with the palms and learn to lift the trunk as high as possible.



Eka Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana



from Halāsana or Ardha Halāsana

49. Eka Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana

- a) from Halāsana
- b) Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana

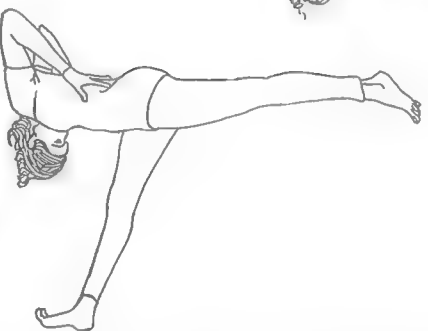
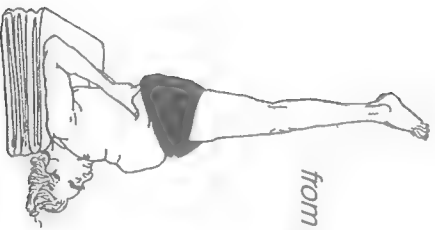
- a) from Halāsana
 - be either in Halāsana or Ardha Halāsana.
 - exhale and take the right leg straight up towards the ceiling.
 - move the back towards the front of the body and do not allow the chest to sink in.
 - exhale, take the right leg down to Halāsana/Ardha Halāsana.
 - now lift the left leg up.

Learn to lift the spine and the trunk up especially on the side that you take the that you take the leg down.

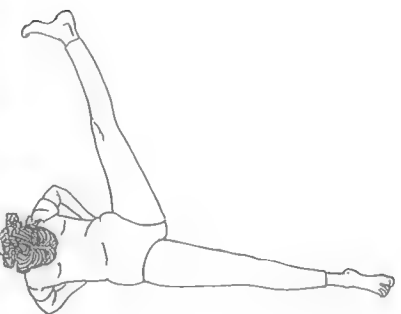
Note: As one begins to learn inversions from Ardha Halāsana, one should learn method a) before one proceeds to learn Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana.

- b) from Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana
 - be in Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana, with the back supported by the palms, legs straight
 - keeping the left leg vertical, exhale and lower the right leg towards the floor; both legs should remain straight
 - exhale, take the right leg down as far as you can, keeping the right leg straight.
 - keep the left leg straight and vertical.
 - initially, you may not be able to touch your toes to the floor; in that case, bring the leg half way down.
 - inhale, lift the right leg back to Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana position, now take the left leg down.

from Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana



Eka Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana



Pārśvaika Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana

Learn to be attentive of the body and relax the brain. You should be able to do without tensing the head.

Note: Do not hurry up to touch the foot to the floor. Rather, your attention should be to maintain the spine and legs straight. Do not cave in the chest

50. Pārśvaika Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana

- keeping the left leg straight, turn the right leg out so the toes point out to the right.
- exhale and lower the right leg out to the side and down towards the floor or a chair, keeping it in line with the trunk.
- the left leg should remain perpendicular, both legs should remain straight.
- inhale and bring the right leg up to *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* and repeat on the other side.

Learn to maintain the pelvis level without shortening the sides of the trunk.

51. Ārdha Halāsana

- a) swinging from the floor
- b) from *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*

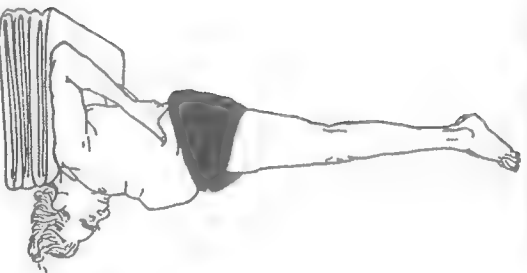
- a) swinging from the floor
- adjust the blankets as for *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*.
- lie down on your back.
- bend your knees, take a swing, raising the legs and buttocks up.
- put the feet against the wall or rest them on the seat of a chair.



swinging from the floor



Ardha Halāsana



from *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*

- place your palms on your back, support your back, raise the spine up, maintain the lift of the chest
- keep both of the legs straight, knees tight
- exhale, bend the knees and roll down.

Learn to swing from the floor to *Ardha Halāsana* or *Halāsana* without tilting the body either to the side or making it heavy on one side.

- b) from *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*
- go to *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*, so that your shoulders are placed three feet (leg length) away from a wall or chair seat
- exhale, lower one leg at a time so the feet rest on a wall or the toes rest on a chair so the legs remain in line with the buttocks. After some practice you can lower both legs together.
- keep the hamstrings straight by lifting the thighs up and opening the backs of the knees.
- keep the hips lifted to maintain the length of the spine.
- go back to *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* and come down; be on your back.

Learn to keep the spine vertically lifted. Remain on the shoulders. Do not cave in the chest

Note: 1) In order to do *Ardha Halāsana*, if one is unable to judge the distance between the wall and oneself one should sit in *Danḍāsana* with the bottom of the feet touching the wall and where the buttocks rest one should mark that line and keep the shoulders exactly on that line to go to *Ardha Halāsana*.



the feet rest on a wall



Ardha Halāsana



Halāsana

2) If you choke, then spread the legs one foot apart so that the diaphragm is not compressed.

52. Halāsana

- a) swinging from the floor
- b) from *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*

- a) swinging from the floor
- follow the steps for *Ardha Halāsana* a), taking the toes to touch the floor.
- exhale and come down.

Note: Those who cannot swing the legs up or cannot lift the buttocks up from the floor, should keep bolsters or pillows under the buttocks so that they remain elevated. This makes it easier to lift the buttocks up to go either to Halāsana or Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana.

- b) from *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*
- be in *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*.
- keeping the legs straight exhale and lower them both to the floor until the toes touch the floor. Take the chest and hips slightly back while you do this.
- keep the palms on the back to help keep the back lifted and perpendicular to the ground.
- keep the shin bones and thighs lifted.
- if you are unable to control the legs, do one at a time.
- to come up, inhale and lift the legs up to *Sarvāṅgāsana*.
- either come down or do the following variations.



bolsters or pillows under the buttocks

Learn to maintain the lift of the spine as in *Ardha Halāsana*, when the toes touch the floor.

53. *Karṇapīḍāsana*

- from *Halāsana* (above) bend the knees and lower them down to the floor either side of the face, the toes point away from the head; soles of the feet are up.
- exhale, raise the knees up and be in *Halāsana*.

Learn to lift the back upwards, against the pressure of the thighs on the trunk. It is not merely the flexing of the knees, but the lifting of the trunk.

54. *Supta Koṇāsana*

- from *Halāsana*, take the right leg sideways to the right and the left leg to the left.
- keep both of the legs straight, knees lifted.
- spread the legs increasing the distance as far as you can.
- to return walk both the feet to *Halāsana*.

Learn to compare the *āsana* with *Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana* and spread the legs wide apart.



Karṇapīḍāsana



Supta Koṇāsana

55. *Pāśva Halāsana*

- from *Supta Koṇāsana*, walk the left leg over to meet the right. Take both the legs as far as you can to the right to be in line with the right shoulder.
- stay in this position keeping the thighs lifted away from the floor.
- bring the left leg back to *Supta Koṇāsana* position.

**Pārśva Halāsana**

- now walk the right leg as far as you can over to the left.
- take both legs as far to the left as you can, remain in this position, lifting both the thighs.
- walk the right leg back to *Supta Koṇāsana* position.
- return both the legs to the centre and do *Halāsana*.
- bend the knees and roll down.

Learn to keep the buttock bones level and avoid the tilt either to the front or back.

Note: 1) Often, one finds Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana coming better after one does Halāsana, Karmapīdāsana and Supta Koṇāsana, since one comes more on the shoulders in these āsanas.

2) Pārśva Halāsana removes heaviness and back ache if it occurs during Sarvāṅgāsana due to uneven extension of the back muscles.

For a full and comprehensive account of significant effects of these *āsanas* and their importance, I refer you to *Light on Yoga*.

These *āsanas*, work on the respiratory, circulatory, nervous and glandular systems. They change the very personality and the mental attitude of a person for the better, so that one's mind gravitates towards purity. These *āsanas* help one to strengthen will power, improve memory, increase intellectual capacity and bring emotional stability, provided they are regularly practised. They help to build up character and improve behavioural patterns.

Those who suffer from cold, cough, asthma, tonsillitis, halitosis, palpitation, insomnia, nervous breakdown, fear complex, superiority and inferiority complex, laziness, lethargy, fatigue, anaemia, poor blood circulation, constipation, low pulse rate, lack of concentration, general weakness, low vitality, hormonal imbalance, menstrual disorders, impotency and so on will benefit from these *āsanas*.

The variations of *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* help to improve the sense of balance in *Sālamba Śīrṣāsana*. As one becomes proficient in *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*, one can improve the performance of *Śīrṣāsana*. Therefore, it is important that one learns *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* properly.

The variations of *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*, *Halāsana*, *Kaṁapīdāsana* and *Supta Koṇāsana* eliminate toxins and waste matter. They rejuvenate the abdominal organs, releasing gas in the stomach and intestines. They improve the circulation in the waist, back and abdomen. They help to contract the abdominal organs, cleansing the vaginal and uterine areas. They exercise the colon, protect the prostate gland from enlargement and improve the function of the excretory system.

A woman's practice of inversions should always commence immediately after the monthly menses is over. In other words when the menstruation ends every month, commence the regular practice attempting the inversions first, which checks further bleeding and brings back hormonal balance.

Avoid all the inversions totally during the menstruation, from day one, until the flow stops.

Apart from the days of the menstrual cycle, one should perform the inversions regularly, along with other *āsanas*, to regulate the flow and maintain gynaecological health.

PART 11

56. *Urdhva Prasārita Pādāsana*57. *Paripūrṇa Nāvāsana*58. *Supṭa Padāṅguśīhāsana I & II*

Chapter VI

ABDOMINAL ĀSĀNAS

People are keen to reduce fat around the waist and tone their abdominal organs. Those who join the classes for the first time, ask especially for abdominal exercises. The abdominal āsanas are known as *Udara Ākunchana Sthiti*.

However, it is unscientific to begin with these āsanas. The standing āsanas prepare one to tone the abdomen and protect it from the exertion or faulty actions that the abdominal āsanas may cause.

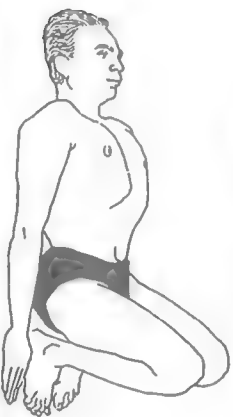
The inversions protect one, so that the abdominal organs are not harmed when one proceeds to the abdominal āsanas. Those who do merely the abdominal āsanas and avoid inversions are likely to suffer from hiatus, umbilical and inguinal hernia, hydrocele, leucorrhoea, menstrual disorders, enlargement of the prostate and so on. The inversions also protect from the adverse effects caused by wrong and injudicious practice. The abdominal work has to be done with the preparation of the standing āsanas and inversions. If the abdomen is un-toned and exerted then problems are invited.

After learning *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana*, *Halāsana* and variations one should learn the constructive abdominal āsanas so that one is safe, as far as organic health is concerned. Any contra-indication or faulty action can be counter-balanced with inversions. In fact that is the reason why one has to learn the inverted āsanas.

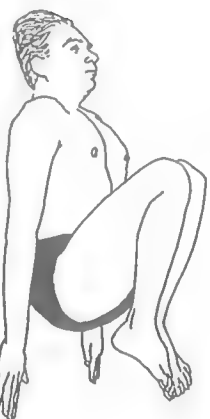
Ūrdhva Prasārita Pādāsana



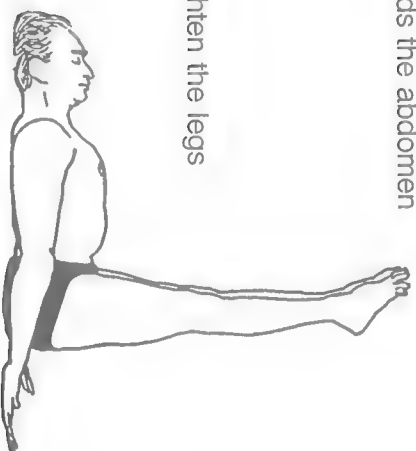
lie down on your back



bend both the legs bringing the heels towards the buttocks



bring the thighs towards the abdomen



straighten the legs

PART 11

56. Ūrdhva Prasārita Pādāsana

- sit in *Dandāsana*.
- lie down on your back with the legs stretched straight, arms by the sides, palms facing the ground.
- bend both the legs bringing the heels towards the buttocks,
- flexing the legs at the hips, bring the thighs towards the abdomen.
- exhale, raise the legs to be perpendicular with the floor, straighten the legs keeping the hips on the ground.
- now exhale, bend the legs, bring the thighs towards the abdomen and slowly lower the feet and legs to the floor.

Learn to maintain the chest well open, keeping the face relaxed. Learn to keep the lower back extended towards the tailbone, on the floor, during the movements of the legs.

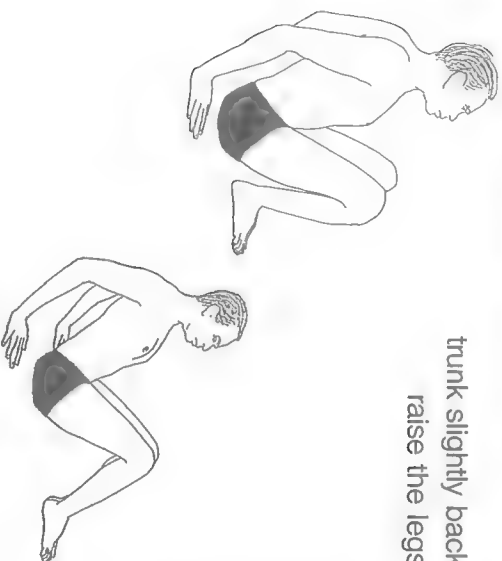
Note: 1) This āsana can be repeated three to five times without stretching of the legs straight on the floor.

2) If one is obese then be close to the wall and keep the legs up on the wall. Keep the buttocks to the wall. First rest the feet on the wall, then, alternately take the feet one inch away from the wall and rest against the wall.

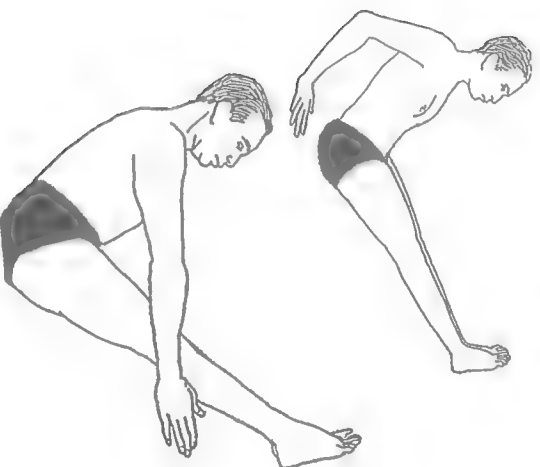
3) One can stretch the arms straight over the head, palms facing towards the ceiling, in order to extend the sides of the trunk, after the legs are raised.

Paripūma Nāvāsana

trunk slightly back
raise the legs



keep the palms on the floor
while the legs are up



Paripūma Nāvāsana

57. Paripūma Nāvāsana

- sit on the floor in *Danḍāsana* position, hands by the sides.
- take the trunk slightly back and raise the legs from the ground and keep the legs firm like a staff.
- bring the arms up and stretch them straight, parallel with the floor, palms facing each other.
- strongly, move the entire spine into the body so that you do not collapse.
- the entire body balances on the two buttocks.
- exhale, lower the arms and legs and be in *Danḍāsana*.

Learn to maintain the balance without sinking the spine and the chest

Note: 1) Those who cannot balance, should keep the palms on the floor while the legs are up.

2) If the legs and abdomen are not strong enough to maintain the āsana with balance, then keep the heels raised up against the wall or a stool and keep the hands by the sides of the buttocks – do with support

3) Avoid these two āsanas during menstruation and pregnancy. Those who suffer from diarrhoea, dysentery, leucorrhoea, meno-metrorrhagia and dysmenorrhoea should not attempt these at all.

Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana



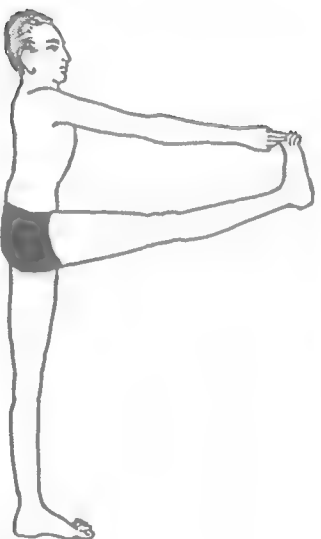
lie on the floor



bend the right knee up towards the chest



catch the big toe



Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana I

58. Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana

a) *Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana I*

b) *Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana II*

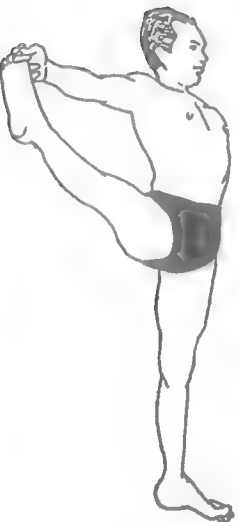
- a) *Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana I*
- lie on the floor with the legs stretched, arms by the sides.
- exhale, bend the right knee up towards the chest and catch the big toe of the right foot with the right hand.
- straighten the right leg to be perpendicular to the floor.
- keep the toe, knee and thigh in line; press the thigh back.
- ensure the left leg thigh does not lift up from the floor.
- exhale, bend the knee, release the hand, bring the leg down and rest it on the floor.
- now raise the left leg and follow the instructions for the left side.

Learn to extend the hamstring muscles and bring free movement in the gluteal muscles.

b) *Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana II*

- from *Supta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana I*.
- exhale, lower the right leg out to the right.
- keeping the leg straight, bring the right foot as far up to be in line with the shoulder as you can, without the left pelvis lifting away from the floor.
- inhale, raise the right leg to be perpendicular again.
- exhale, lower the leg to the floor.
- now do on the other side.

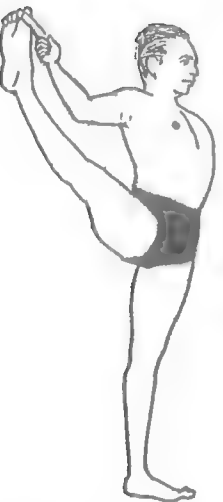
Learn to bring the freedom in the pelvic joint, groin and the root of the thigh.



Supta Padāṅguṣṭhāsana II



***Supta Padāṅguṣṭhāsana I
& Supta Padāṅguṣṭhāsana II***
holding with a belt



Note: 1) Do not lower the leg to the side so much that you lose the position of the other leg. The back of the trunk, the buttock and the entire leg should remain on the floor.
2) If you are unable to reach the toes, put a strap around the foot for both I & II.

Urdhva Prasārita Pādāsana and *Paripūrṇa Nāvāsana* help to reduce fat around the waist and the abdomen. They strengthen the lumbar and the sacral muscles, tone the abdomen and relieve one from gastric trouble such as bloating sensation and flatulence. However, when these *āsanas* lead to abdominal muscle contraction or back pain, they are counter balanced with *Supta Padāṅguṣṭhāsana II*.

Supta Padāṅguṣṭhāsana I & *II* relieve one from sciatica and lumbago pain. They give a great relief to the pelvic region by aerating the area, protecting one from hernia, prostrate and menstrual problems. However, avoid *Supta Padāṅguṣṭhāsana I*, during menstruation.

PART 12

59. *Chaturanga Daṇḍāsana*

60. *Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana*

61. *Dhanurāsana*

62. *Śalabhāsana*

63. *Uṣṭrāsana*

Chapter VII

BACKWARD EXTENSIONS

Now, let us see the backward extension of the spine. The backward extension is known as *Pūrva Pratana Sthiti*.

The preparatory *āsanas* are given for the backward extension of the spine. Apart from flexibility of the spine one needs the firmness of the spinal muscles. Otherwise the flexibility will invite weakness and pain for which the beginners have to pay heavily. There are four *āsanas* in this section. However, the first one tones the spinal muscles for back arches, where as the last one teaches the anti-gravitational lift of the spine and spinal muscles.

In both *Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana* and *Chaturanga Daṇḍāsana* there are two ways of positioning the feet. One is to keep the toes curved and dug inwards towards the head and the second one is to keep the metatarsals extended so that the toes remain pointing away from the head. The first method tones the leg muscles whereas the second tones the spinal muscles. A beginner will find the toes inward beneficial since one gets a good grip on the leg muscles. If the leg muscles are not strong enough to hold, then the spinal muscles are hurt. Therefore, one should tone the legs and then learn to adjust the spine by making the leg muscles strong.

PART 12

Chaturāṅga Daṇḍāsana

anchoring the toes under



toes extended back

59. Chaturāṅga Daṇḍāsana

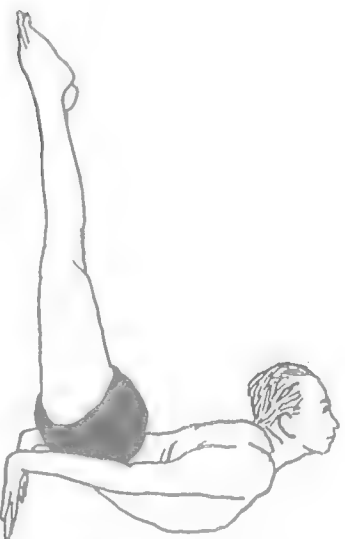
- a) anchoring the toes under
- b) toes extended back

- a) anchoring the toes under
 - lie face down on the floor.
 - bend the elbows and place the palms by your side in line with the floating ribs.
 - have the feet one foot apart and anchor the toes so they point towards the head.
 - exhale and raise the entire body a few inches above the floor.
- keep the chest, hips, thighs and knees lifted so the whole body rests only on the hands and toes.
- keep the face and chest facing the floor.
- exhale, lower the trunk down to the floor.

Learn to keep the knees and thighs firm above the floor without sticking the tailbone up towards the ceiling.

Note: If it is not possible to lift the body off the floor, then do Adho-Mukha Śvānāsana and reach this āsana by flexing the elbows.

- b) toes extended back
 - lie face down (prone position), with the toes extended back.
 - have the feet together, legs straight, extended.
 - have the hands, palms spread, in line with the floating ribs.
 - pressing the palms, lifting the hips and thighs, raise the entire trunk a few inches from the ground (or do as above).



Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana

- now, roll the body and the arms in such a way that the toes extend back and you remain on the metatarsals.
- keep the entire trunk and legs like a staff (*Danda*) otherwise you will collapse back to the floor.
- exhale, lower the body to the floor under control.

Learn to keep the chest up so the whole body is parallel to the floor.

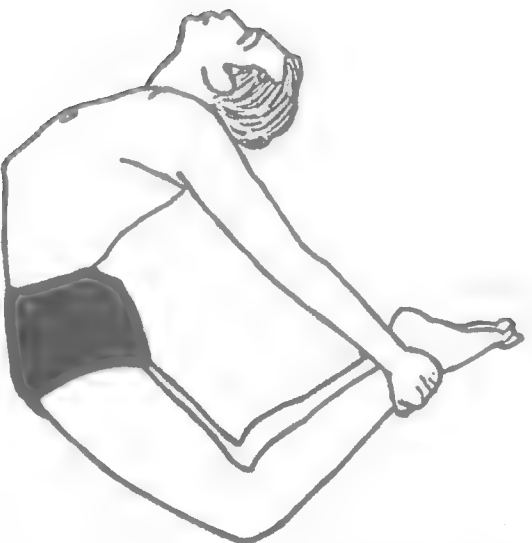
Note: 1) This is certainly not a back bending āsana. But it tones the spinal muscles for the next three āsanās, namely, Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana, Dhanurāsana and Śalabhāsana. It is a parameter to know the strength of the spinal muscles.

2) Avoid it during menstruation.

60. Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana

Note: This āsana may be performed with the toes in the same positions as Chaturāṅga Daṇḍāsana. The following instructions are for the toes extended back.

- be in the prone position with the palms on the floor by the sides of the chest
- spread the palms and fingers.
- inhale, raise the head and chest up, straightening the arms, locking the elbows.
- lift the pelvis, thighs and knees away from the floor.
- the weight of the body is resting on the palms and the insteps of the feet.
- keeping the elbows locked, roll the shoulder bones back and lift the chest further.
- lengthening the neck, take the head back and look up.
- after staying in this position for some time, bend the elbows and lower the trunk back to the floor.



Dhanurāsana



Śalabhāsana

Learn to raise the trunk higher up, using the arms as the support.

Note: Those who cannot bear the direct weight on the wrists due to the weak wrists, elbows and shoulders or who suffer from spondylosis can turn the palms out away from the body and do the āsana. Later, as the arms and neck get toned they can adopt the classic method.

61. Dhanurāsana

- from the prone position, bend the knees, bringing the feet towards the buttocks.
- take the arms behind and catch hold of the ankles, right ankle with the right hand, left with the left hand.
- exhale, gripping the ankles, raise the chest, knees and thighs up away from the floor.
- keep the feet and knees slightly apart
- keep a firm grip on the ankles and use a resistance between the legs and the arms to help in raising the legs/chest further.
- lift the head and look up.
- the body will rest on the lower abdominal area.
- exhale, release the ankles, lower the trunk and legs to the floor.

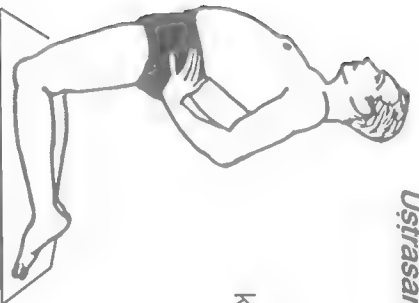
Learn to raise the arch of the body up giving a backward pull to the arms. However, balance on the abdominal area.

62. Śalabhāsana

- from the prone position, exhale, raise the head, chest and thighs up from the floor at the same time.

Uṣṭrāsana

kneel on a blanket



keeping the chest well lifted, curve the trunk back



take the hands to touch the heels

- only the abdomen remains on the floor.
- descend the buttocks towards the floor so the tailbone is pressed down.
- extend the arms straight back towards the feet
- lift the chest and thighs further and look up.
- exhale, release the trunk and legs to the floor.

Learn to work on the thighs and chest simultaneously to keep them above the ground with an equal amount of lift.

63. Uṣṭrāsana

Uṣṭrāsana is the only back bending taught to beginners that gives an anti-gravitational lift to the spine and spinal muscles. It is a preparatory *āsana* yielding the basic intelligence required to proceed further for the rest of the back bending *āsanas*.

- kneel on a blanket with the knees and feet hip width apart (only at the advanced level it is performed with the knees and feet together).
- check that the shin bones are parallel and the toes point straight back
- have the hands on the hips.
- keeping the thighs perpendicular to the ground extend, lengthen and lift the entire front trunk up.
- tuck in the buttocks.
- move the spine in between the shoulder-blades.
- exhale, keeping the chest well lifted, curve the trunk back
- take the hands to touch the heels behind.
- use the hands to lift the chest further by moving the shoulder-blades in.
- keeping the neck long, take the head back and look behind.
- raise the head up, bring the trunk to the upright position by taking the hands on the waist
- sit in *Vīrāsana*.

Learn to bend backward whilst keeping control over the legs. Learn to keep the shins pressed down in order to lift the thighs and spine. Do not distort the legs for the sake of bending.

For a beginner, the back arch is introduced in a prone position because in the prone position the arching of the back is done from the external muscles of the spine. This restful stage is done first. The student has to be strong in the spine for the further back arches. If the back hurts in back arches especially in prone positions, it indicates a defect either in the spine or spinal muscles, which gives a signal to the practitioner to correct the defect in other *āsanas*.

Apart from strengthening the arms and toning the kidneys, *Chaturanga Dandāsana* prepares the back muscles to support the spine, which in turn leads to doing a back arch in a better way. Therefore, though it is not an actual backward extension of the spine, it prepares one's back for the back arches.

Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana removes the stiffness and pain in the back. There is also a sequential pressure in the abdomen which benefits digestion, even as the back is extended in an arch. The pressure on the abdomen tones the abdominal organs. The spine is given more space and the chest develops increasing lung capacity. *Dhanurāsana* and *Śalabhāsana* act to strengthen the back and exterior spinal muscles.

Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana and *Uṣṭrāsana* are preparatory *āsanas* for the advanced backbends. There is plenty of scope in these two *āsanas* to understand the curvature of the spine and any unevenness in the spinal muscles. It allows readjustment, correction and restructuring of the back muscles and toning of the organs such as the lungs, heart, liver, kidneys and pancreas, so that they bear the stress in the backward extensions. Often, while doing the backward extensions, students experience breathlessness, hyperventilation, vomiting sensation, nausea, headache and sickness in addition to backache. Therefore, some people are afraid to bend backwards. They feel nauseated and dizziness and as though they are having

an attack of vertigo. It is mainly because of stiffness of the spinal muscles and sluggishness of the liver. These two *āsanas* prepare one, not only at the physical level but at the mental level also, removing such obstacles.

During menstruation and pregnancy, women should avoid the *āsanas* from this group (PART 12)

However, if one approaches the back arches methodically, by practising the *āsanas* mentioned earlier with proper attention, then the above mentioned problems do not arise. It is the attraction towards the back-arches which makes one to practise the back-arches indiscriminately. Therefore, consolidate the *āsanas* mentioned earlier before attempting these *āsanas*.

Among all these āsanās there are a few āsanās which have to be treated in a “touch and go” or “attempt and release” method as far as beginners are concerned. If the spinal muscles are not trained one cannot stay in these āsanās for a long time. As one gets used to the āsanās and does them correctly, one can prolong the timing. For example, Vīkṣāsana, Utkatāsana, Parighāsana, Gomukhāsana, Parivṛta Pāśva Koṇāsana, Paripūrṇa Nāvāsana, Chaturāṅga Daṇḍāsana, Dhanurāsana and Śalabhāsana would not be suitable to those who are ageing, feeble or weak, or those who have not toned their body. Otherwise, these āsanās are harmless.

Sūrya Namaskāra

- 1 ***Samasthiti***
- 2 ***Namaskārāsana***
- 3 ***Ūrdhva Hastāsana or Ūrdhva
Namaskārāsana***
- 4 ***Uttānāsana***
- 5 ***Adho Mukha Śvānāsana***
- 6 ***Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana***
- 7 ***Chaturāṅga Daṇḍāsana***
- 8 ***Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana***
- 9 ***Adho Mukha Śvānāsana***
- 10 ***Uttānāsana***
- 11 ***Ūrdhva Hastāsana***
- 12 ***Namaskārāsana***
- 13 ***Samasthiti***

Chapter VIII

SŪRYA NAMASKĀRA

A continuous cycle of linked *āsanas*

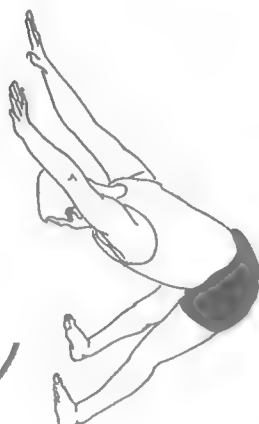
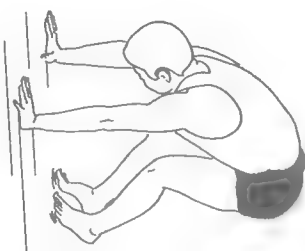
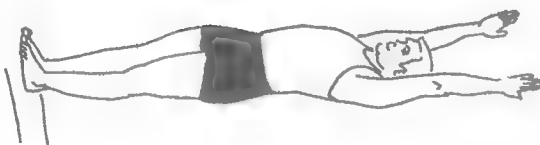
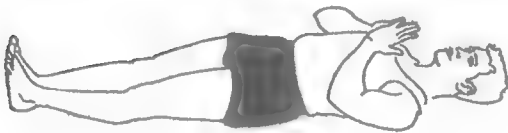
The sun-salutation is a part of daily religious prayer, which comes from time immemorial. Every one, along with offerings and prayers, saluted the sun, since *Sūrya*, the Sun God has a tremendous solar energy, which is a vital need for mankind.

Here is the well-known *Sūrya Namaskāra* that gives mobility, alertness, speed, sharpness and freedom while developing will power and physical strength.

PART 13

64. Sūrya Namaskāra

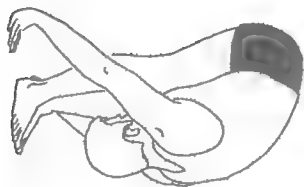
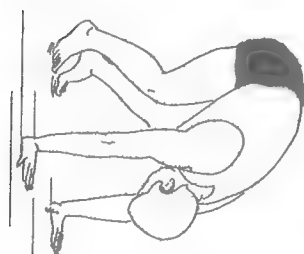
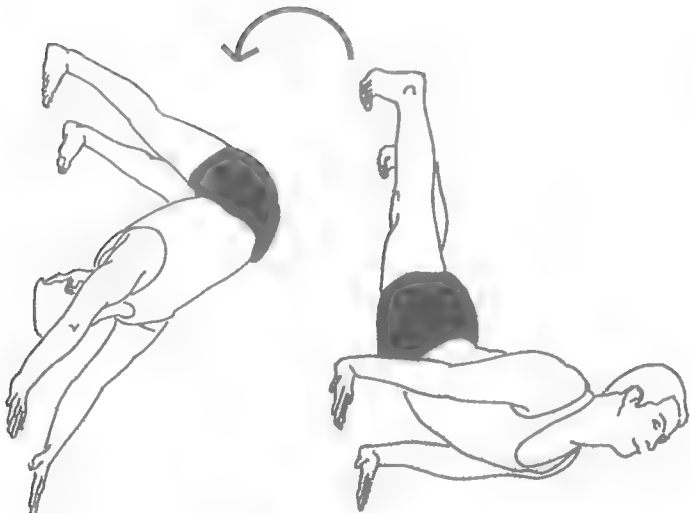
***Note: Those who want to practise the advanced method of
Sūrya Namaskāra should refer to Light on Yoga.***



SŪRYA



NAMASKĀRA



Sūrya Namaskāra

1. ***Samasthiti*** – stand with feet together, knees tight, chest forward, arms extended downwards.
2. ***Namaskārāsana*** – inhale, fold the palms into *Namaskāra* position in front of the sternum.
3. ***Ūrdhva Hastāsana*** – exhale, release the hands, inhale and stretch the arms up or do *Ūrdhva Namaskārāsana*
4. ***Uttānāsana*** – exhale, and lower the arms and trunk down, keep the palms by the sides of the feet, open the fingers.
5. ***Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*** – inhale, exhale – bend the knees and jump both the feet back to *Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*.
6. ***Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana*** – inhale, lower the hips towards the floor, raise the chest up, look up to be in *Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana*.
7. ***Chaturāṅga Dandāsana*** – exhale – lower the chest towards the floor, keeping the pelvis, thighs and knees above the floor.
8. ***Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana*** – inhale, raise the chest, straighten the arms and look up.
9. ***Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*** – exhale, come back to *Adho Mukha Śvānāsana*.
10. ***Uttānāsana*** – inhale, bend the knees, exhale and jump the feet between the hands and straighten the legs; take the head towards the shins.
11. ***Ūrdhva Hastāsana or Ūrdhva Namaskārāsana*** – inhale, raise the trunk and arms upwards.
12. ***Namaskārāsana*** – exhale, fold the palms in front of the chest, inhale.
13. ***Samasthiti*** – exhale, release the hands by the sides.

This completes one cycle of *Sūrya Namaskāra*. It can be repeated one after the other. Usually, it is repeated twelve times reciting the twelve names of the Sun God.

Here are the twelve names of the Sun God. One has to utter the name first and then proceed with salutations.

- 1 *Āum Mitrāya Namaḥ*
 - 2 *Āum Ravaye Namaḥ*
 - 3 *Āum Sūryāya Namaḥ*
 - 4 *Āum Bhānave Namaḥ*
 - 5 *Āum Khagāya Namaḥ*
 - 6 *Āum Pūṣṇe Namaḥ*
 - 7 *Āum Hiranyagarbhāya Namaḥ*
 - 8 *Āum Marīchaye Namaḥ*
 - 9 *Āum Ādityāya Namaḥ*
 - 10 *Āum Savitre Namaḥ*
 - 11 *Āum Arkāya Namaḥ*
 - 12 *Āum Bhāskarāya Namaḥ*
- After the twelfth salutation say -
Āum Shri Savitru Sūrya Nārāyaṇāya Namaḥ

It is also done attempting the standing *āsanas* in between the jumps, forming a chain. For instance, after the fifth stage, one does *Uththita Trikoṇāsana* with a forward jump and completes the *āsana*, coming back to stage five; again, jump to do the *āsana* on the other side, and come back to stage five and then proceed further following with stage six.

The fast movements and quick change in position ensure freedom of movement, creating agility and flexibility and improving blood circulation. The dull brain becomes active and the brooding mind gets refreshed. Thus, it is a kind of brainwash, where a person begins to see with a new perspective and a better future. Therefore, youngsters enjoy it and feel a satisfaction in the workout.

It would be wrong to say that a patient with heart problems will benefit, as these days often one exercises in order to face the stress test. In such cases, one needs more the restorative, healing *āsanas* such as the supine postures and the inversions. The standing

āsanas and backward extensions such as *Uṣṭrāsana* will also help to bear the stress and exertion as well as tone the heart muscles. For this situation it would be a mistake to introduce *Sūrya Namaskāra*.

Women should avoid *Sūrya Namaskāra* during menstruation and pregnancy. However, the *āsanas* except stage six and seven can be attempted independently without jumps, avoiding fast and quick movements.

PART 14

- 65. Supta Vīrāsana**
- 66. Supta Baddha Koṇāsana**
- 67. Sālamba Pūrvottānāsana**
- 68. Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana**
- 69. Setubandha Sarvāṅgāsana**
- 70. Viparīta Karaṇi**
- 71. Śavāsana**

Chapter IX

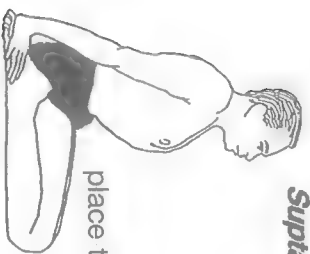
RESTORATIVE ĀSANAS

These *āsanas* are known as *Viśrānta Kāraka āsanas* and are meant to rest the organic body. Each organ is as though separated from the other in order to oxygenate and rest. With the knife of consciousness and awareness, one is able to dissect the body from inside. However, one has to prolong the duration of stay in the *āsanas* five to ten minutes, in order to have recovery.

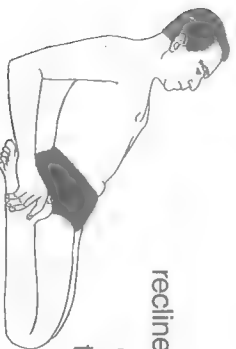
In this group we have introduced a few *āsanas* for the beginners so they get the passive extensions which are meant for recovery and recuperation. For these *āsanas* one needs equipment that most households have, such as bolsters, blankets, pillows, a bed, dining table etc. Pregnant women can do these *āsanas*. However, during menstruation women should avoid *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana* and *Viparīta Karaṇi*, since these two are inverted *āsanas*.

Note: *Supta Vīrāsana, Supta Baddha Koṇāsana* and *Śavāsana* are known as the *āsanas* of *Supta Sthiti*. *Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana, Setubandha Sarvāṅgāsana* and *Viparīta Karaṇi* belong to *Viparīta Sthiti* and *Sālamba Pūrvottānāsana* to *Pūrva Pratana Sthiti*.

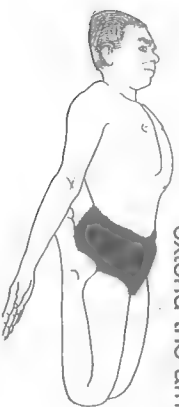
Supta Virāsana



sit in *Virāsana*,
place the palms on the feet



recline the trunk back,
come to rest on
the bent elbows



extend the arms sideways



arms over the head

arms folded



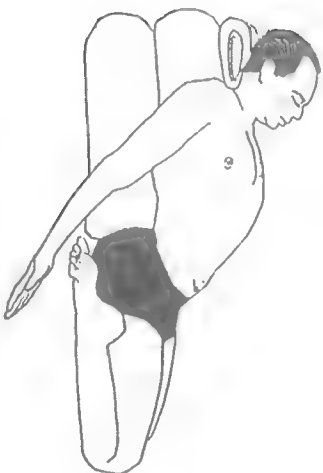
PART 14

65. Supta Virāsana

- a) arms sideways
- b) arms over the head
- c) arms folded

66. Supta Virāsana

- sit in *Virāsana*, place the palms on the feet
- reclining the trunk back, come to rest on the bent elbows, inhale, lift the chest and lower the trunk to rest on the floor.
- a) arms sideways
 - from this position, extend the arms sideways at an angle of about 60° from the torso with the upper arms rotating out, palms facing towards the ceiling.
- b) arms over the head
 - with the arms straight, stretch them up towards the ceiling and then over the head towards the floor beyond the head, palms face towards the ceiling.
- c) arms folded
 - bend the elbows and catch the right elbow with the left hand and the left elbow with the right hand.
 - take the elbows over the head and rest them above the head. One has to alternate the catching of the elbows as you learnt with *Baddha Hasta Tāḍāsana*
 - release the arms, come back to *Virāsana* and *Danḍāsana*.



support of bolsters



Supta Baddha Koṇāsana

Note: All of the above Vīrāsana positions can be done with the support of a bolster. If you are unable to manage over one bolster use two. The arms can be placed in any of these restful positions.

- first sit in Vīrāsana as already described.
- place a long bolster lengthwise behind you.
- check that the bolster is straight
- now follow the same steps to lie over the bolster as for resting on the floor. Make sure the spine is placed evenly lengthwise on the bolster.

66. Supta Baddha Koṇāsana

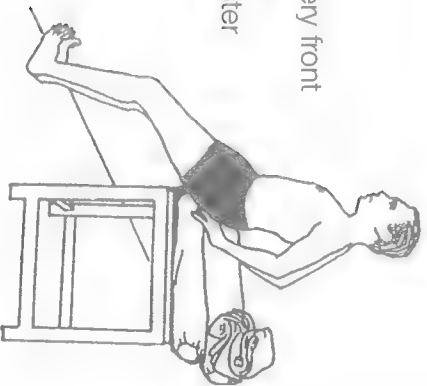
Note: This āsana can be done with or without the support of the bolster as mentioned above.

- sit in Baddha Koṇāsana. Place a bolster lengthwise as mentioned above, recline back and go flat on your back
- taking the support of the elbows, lie the trunk, shoulders and head down on the floor.
- all the arm positions of Supta Vīrāsana can be done in this pose.
- release the arms and legs, sit in Daṇḍāsana.

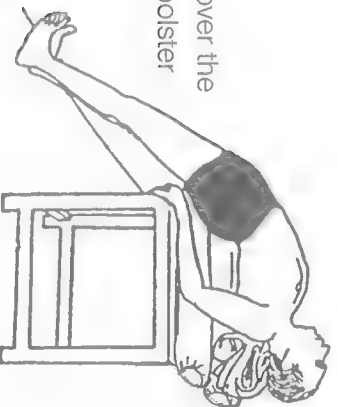
Note: 1) Do not sink the chest in. Breathe smoothly, by relaxing the throat and facial muscles. In order to feel the restfulness close the eyes. Let the breathing happen smoothly.

Sālamba Pūrvottānāsana

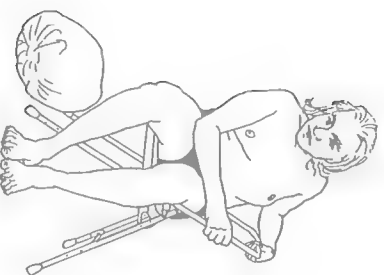
sit on the very front edge of the bottom bolster



lie back over the second bolster



sit sideways on the chair



Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana
– chair

2) Both the āsanas check heavy menstrual bleeding, and are, therefore, advised to do during the periods.

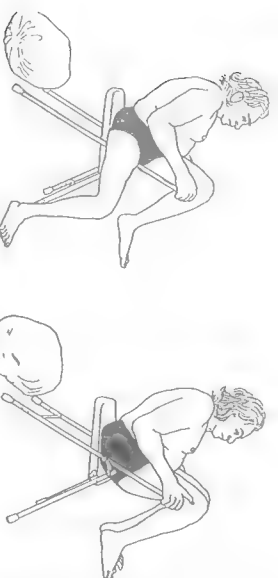
67. Sālamba Pūrvottānāsana

- have a table about 2' 6" away from a wall.
- place two bolsters, one on top of the other, slightly recessed on the table top.
- sit on the very front edge of the bottom bolster, hold the edges of the table and lie back over the second bolster.
- stretch the legs straight so that the toes are supported against the wall.
- let the arms extend out to the side with the palms facing up.
- if the head is thrown back, place another blanket for support.
- bend the knees, exhale and get up, lifting the trunk up.

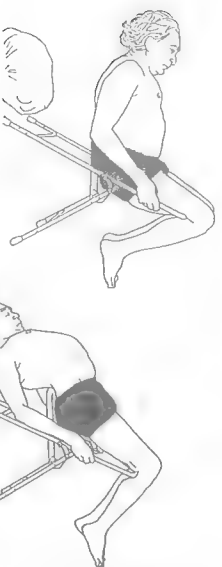
Learn to spread the diaphragm. Broaden the chest. Spread the intercostal muscles. Keep the abdomen soft and below the level of the chest in all these three āsanas. Breathe smoothly, keeping the exhalation slightly longer than normal. Do not let the buttocks and feet slide down. One should feel the body properly hooked up on the bolster.

68. Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana – chair

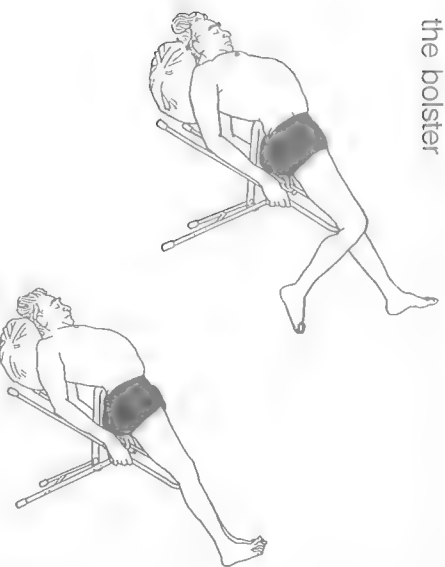
Note: We are giving this technique with the prop in order to make this āsana accessible to beginners, aged and diseased persons.



turn yourself to the back rest of the chair,
hook the legs over the back rest,
one by one.



recline your back until the shoulders reach
the bolster



stretch the legs straight, one by one.

- place a chair and a bolster on the floor, right in front of the chair.
- place a folded blanket on the seat of the chair, so the edge of the seat does not hurt the back.
- sit on the chair, sideways as in *Bharadvājāsana* – chair (PART 9).
- turn yourself to the back rest of the chair, hold the arms of the chair.
- now hook the legs over the back rest, one by one.
- exhale and recline your back towards the bolster.
- slide gradually, until the shoulders reach the bolster.
- keep the waist hooked on the seat of the chair so you do not slide off the chair.
- now, stretch the legs straight, one by one so that the legs rest on the back rest of the chair.
- maintain the grip of the arms on the chair firmly, so that you are able to expand the chest and elongate the body and at the same time rest the brain.
- after staying in the *āsana* for some time, bend your knees, rest the bottom of the feet on the back rest of the chair.
- loosen the grip on the arms of the chair and gradually slide down to the floor.
- wait in that position for a while, roll to the side and sit up. Do not hurry to sit up.

**Note: Do not put the dead weight of the body on the chair.
Hold the chair and keep ascending up on the chair.**

69. *Setubandha Sarvāṅgāsana*

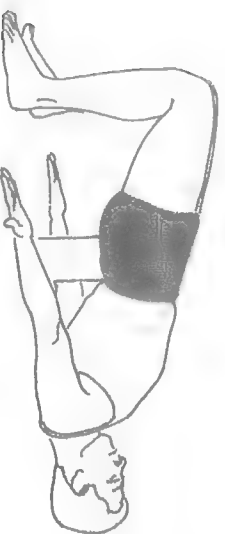
- a) cross bolsters
- b) brick

- a) cross bolsters
- place two bolsters on top of each other so they cross over like a (+), have the bottom one horizontal and the top one vertical.
- sit on one end of the vertical bolster and lie back, so that the back of the head and shoulders come to rest on the floor.

Setubandha Sarvāṅgāsana



cross pillows



raise the hips/buttocks up, place a brick vertically under the sacrum, towards the tail-bone

brick



straighten the legs, open up the chest

- stretch out the arms to the sides.
- now, stretch out the legs so they are straight, resting on the floor.
- make sure that the chest is open.
- if necessary, add some support under the shoulders, neck and head and if the back is irritated, keep the feet up on a box or bolster.
- hold the bolsters, bend the knees and slide down towards the head side.

Note: See that you lay your trunk properly arching the back on the bolsters. If you slide too much towards the head then the chest narrows and the abdomen gets puffed. If you slide towards the legs too much then the buttocks drop and the lumbar feels the strain.

b) brick

- lie on the floor, with the knees bent, toes pointing towards the wall.
- keeping the head, neck and shoulders on the floor, press the feet on the floor and raise the hips/buttocks up.
- place a brick vertically under the sacrum, towards the tail-bone.
- straighten the legs, one at a time, the centre of the back of the heel resting on the floor.
- open up the chest
- extend the arms along the floor towards the feet
- to come up, bend the knees, lift the hips, remove the brick and lower the buttocks to the floor, then roll over to the side and sit up.

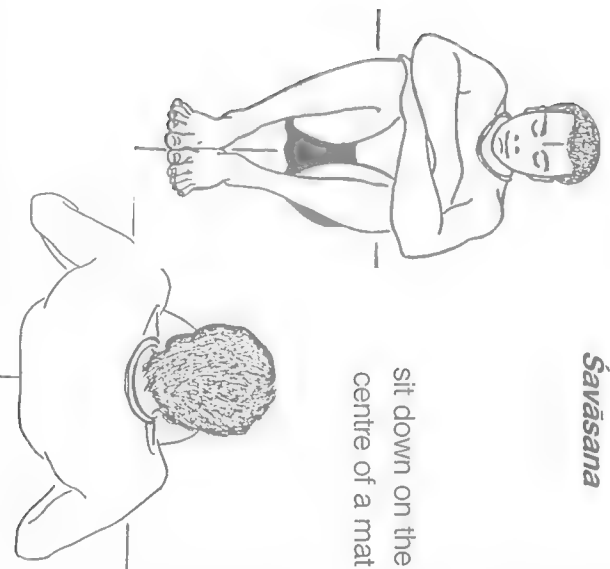
70. Viparīṇa Karāṇi

- sit on two bolsters that are placed on top of each other.
- lie down so that the shoulders, neck and back of the head are on the floor.
- spread the arms out to the sides at about 60°.
- bend the knees and bring them over towards the chest



Vipariṇā Karanī

Śavāsana



lower the trunk down
to rest on bent elbows

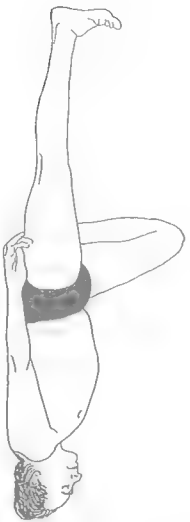
- straighten the legs up towards the ceiling.
- adjust the legs so that they are perpendicular to the floor.
- lift the chest.
- to come down, bend the knees and lower the feet to the floor, now slide so the hips are brought down to the floor.
- roll to the right side and sit up.

Learn to open and widen the chest by lifting the dorsal the spine with the spinal muscles and deflating the abdomen.

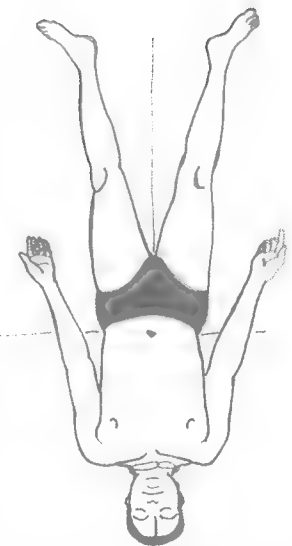
Note: This āsana can be done against the wall by placing the bolsters against the wall.

71. Śavāsana

- sit down on the centre of a mat or blanket with the knees bent, feet flat on the floor.
- lower the trunk down to rest on bent elbows, then carefully bring the torso to rest in a straight line on the floor.
- straighten the legs one at a time.
- have the legs together, feet together.
- release any hold on the legs and let the feet drop out to the sides.
- rest the extended arms by the sides of the trunk at an angle 60° from the trunk.
- rotate the upper arms, elbows and wrists so that the palms face towards the ceiling, the hands rest on the middle knuckle.
- make sure that the head rests on the centre part of the back of the skull. If the head is thrown back one may need a folded blanket under the head.
- with the trunk and limbs carefully and evenly placed, lower the upper eyelids down to the lower eyelids, release the eyeballs into their sockets, relax any tension that might be on the face around the eyes, cheeks and lips.



straighten the legs one at a time



relax each and every muscle of the body

- relax the throat and tongue.
- relax each and every muscle of the body. Do not harden the flesh anywhere. Let loose the body. Feel as though the body is completely dropped on to the floor.
- to stop the mind becoming distracted by its own mental activity, watch the breathing, allowing the breath to gradually become soft and even.
- stay in the *āsana* for 5 to 10 minutes.
- finish the *Śavāsana* slowly, open the eyes, flex the knees, turn to the right and then get up without jolting the body. Do not hurry.

Learn to relax the body, part by part thoroughly, silence and quieten the mind and learn to be a silent non-interactive observer.

Note: For further details on *Śavāsana* and *Prāṇāyāma* refer to *Light on Prāṇāyāma* and *YOGA: A Gem for Women*.

Supine *āsanas* help one to recover after a prolonged illness. Women benefit during the menstrual flow, especially if there is dysmenorrhoea and menorrhagea. These *āsanas* are soothing for sufferers of acidity and flatulence. Asthmatics find the breathing process improving.

In *Supta Virāsana*, the abdominal and the pelvic regions are extended and the thoracic is expanded. The folded legs remove pain and fatigue of the legs and the spinal muscles. Though the spine is resting downwards, it is not allowed to sag or sink. This particular adjustment of the back, chest and abdomen enables one to go to *Śavāsana* in a proper way and one can relax the body and the mind without allowing the mind to go to a dreamy, shaky and disturbed state.

Ujjāyī Prāṇāyāma I & II

When one learns to consciously rest, relax and become quiet, then the breath that is revealed, and its movement that is felt, leads one towards the first, basic preparation of *prāṇāyāma*. The inhalations and exhalations remain normal, soft and slow. This is *Ujjāyī* I. Later the exhalations become deeper than normal as well as soft and smooth, though the inhalations remain the same as above. This leads the organs of perception and the mind to reach within, towards their source. This type of breath – normal inhalation and deep exhalation, is called *Ujjāyī* II. That is how a beginner lays the foundation for *prāṇāyāma* – the fourth limb of *aṣṭāṅga yoga*.

This is where the syllabus for the beginners in the preliminary course ends.

You may ask how long should one practise daily. Gururji has answered this question many times. A qualitative practice is better than a quantitative one. In each *āsana* every part can be corrected. You have to become watchful for the why, what and how of the *āsana* that you are performing. For a beginner, the quality of the *āsana* is more important than the duration of stay in the *āsana*. An *āsana* may not take more than twenty to thirty seconds. However, you may stay for three to five minutes in *āsanas* such as *Sālamba Śrīṣāsana*, *Sālamba Savāṅgāsana*, *Halāsana*, *Paścimottānāsana*, sitting *āsanas* and *Savāsana* as well as the *āsanas* mentioned in PART 14. It is better to repeat the *āsanas* two or three times (except *Sālamba Śrīṣāsana*). Therefore, the programme here will not take more than forty-five to fifty minutes for a beginner. Again, one can divide the practice into two sessions, according to the availability of time. It can be divided even as the total weekly programme. Those who lack strong will power may do first once in a week, then twice and later on alternate days. When you get accustomed to the practice, you can do every day regularly. Do not burden your mind with the idea of doing too many *āsanas*. Do not feel the pressure on the mind that it is a time consuming practice. Start the practice with the freedom of the mind.

Many a time, the practitioners do all the *āsanas* and omit inversions, which is absolutely wrong and unpardonable. Inversions are the backbone of the practice of *āsanas*. One may miss the other *āsanas* due to lack of time, but should not miss the regular practice of inversions, except during menstruation, as far as women are concerned. Inversions control the metabolism of the body, keep a check on blood pressure, maintain glucose levels and chemical balance. They yield emotional balance, stimulate the intellectual centre and refresh the mind.

For a beginner, precision is not so important because his intelligence at this stage is limited to mobility, flexibility and balance of the body. Therefore, the technical points need not be so precise and deep. A beginner begins to learn from the starting point till he gets into the

āsana. He aims at the *āsana*. For him that is the journey of practice. Such a 'category of pupil' is called a 'beginner'. They are at the stage of *Āraṇbhāvasthā*. The real journey is ahead.

The mind is fresh while getting into the *āsana*. Once, the *āsana* is attempted, with the joy of achievement one forgets to release the *āsana* with the same control of mind. Therefore, one has to develop a kind of calmness of mind to release the *āsana*.

Whilst one goes to the *āsana*, all the energies of the body and the mind should flow in that direction alone. Once the *āsana* is learnt and one is able to stay in the *āsana*, the centralised or the aimed energy begins to get diffused and this diffused energy, if not channelled properly, brings the feeling of unevenness. When the diffused energy scatters instead of getting channelled, then the practitioners begin to say, "Oh! Why do I feel pain here and not there? Why do I feel stretch here and not there?" This contemplation on the *āsanas* means then that you are no longer a beginner.

These questions can easily be answered by saying that there is something wrong in the practice. But, to be precise, it is not that the feeling of pain and imbalance has come due to wrong practice. On the contrary, it is because you have started to feel the flow of energy; you have begun to realise the unevenness that exists in your body.

You invest your energy to learn the *āsana* and as a return the energy which is produced, has to be utilised in that *āsana*, so that the *āsana* gives a better effect and more understanding. There begins the real learning. Precision comes when you begin to utilise the energy correctly. Put your energy into the *āsana* so you learn how to do better, bringing evenness, balance and stability.

The second common question is how should one's breathing be in the *āsana*? The theoretical advice would be to breathe normally. Firstly, you have to see that you do not hold the breath and secondly, instead of concentrating on the breath, concentrate on the technical part of the *āsana*. Focusing on the breath is possible only after getting some maturity in the *āsana*. It is misguiding to ask a beginner to concentrate on the breath. Often, rather than concentrating on the breath, one fiddles with the breath. In fact, those teachers who have not

understood how to energise each and every part of the body will ask you to concentrate on the breath which will be wrong and misleading. When you pour water on a half-baked vessel, what happens? The pot will crack and break. Similarly, if you load the half or un-baked body with the breath, it will damage the nerves. For this reason one asks the beginner to concentrate on the technical performance of the *āsanas* and not the breathing. Similarly, the practice of *prāṇāyāma* for beginners is limited to *Ujjāyī* I & II alone.

Here, we conclude *Yoga in Action* for beginners. I now hope that you know how much you have to learn as a beginner on the yogic path. An auspicious and good beginning leads one towards the Ultimate end. Slow and steady win the race. Our duty as a beginner is to keep on practising with a steady and firm mind.



Invocation to Patañjali

*yogena cītasya padena vācāṃ
malam śaṁṁasya ca vaidyakena
yopākarottam̐ pravaram̐ munīnam̐
patañjaliṁ prāñjalirāto' smi
ābāhu puruṣākāraṁ
śaṁkha cakrāśi dhāṁnam
sahasra śīrasaṁ śvetam̐
praṇamāmi patañjaliṁ*

Chapter X: The Sequence of Learning and Practice

This last section gives the sequence in which the āsana-s described in the book can be learnt and practiced. The āsana-s and the sequence in which they have to be practiced every week, is given below. When there are empty spaces for a particular āsana, then it indicates that the same need not be practiced that week. If there are two numbers in the column for the same āsana, then it indicates that this āsana has to be performed twice. For example, 17, 19 for *Paschimottanāsana* in the 7th week indicates that *Paschimottanāsana* has to be the 17th as well as the 19th āsana to be performed in Week 7. It is important to maintain the sequence of āsana-s as has been listed as it is not the individual āsana but a consolidated practice of a group of āsana-s that brings about the desired effect on the practitioner.

		Weeks							
S.No	Āsana	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
1	Samasthiti	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	Ūrdhva Hastāsana	2	2			2			
3	Ūrdhva Baddhāṅguliyāsana	3	3	2	2	3	2		
4	Namaskārāsana	4	4			4			
5	Ūrdhva Namaskārāsana from Ūrdhva Hastāsana	5	5			5			
6	Paschimā Baddha Hastāsana					6	3		
7	Gomukhāsana					7	4		
8	Paschimā Namaskārāsana					8	5		
9	Vrksāsana			3		9	6		
10	Utthitā Hasta Pādāsana	6	6			11	8		
11	Parśva Hasta Pādāsana	7	7			12	9		
12	Utthitā Trikonāsana	8	8	4	3	13	10	2	2
13	Virabhadrāsana II		9	5	4	14	11	3	
14	Utthitā Parśvakonāsana		10	6	5	15	12		3
15	Vimānāsana				6	16	13	4	
16	Virabhrāsana I				7	17	14		4
	turning the trunk			7					
	turning the trunk & bending the leg								
17	Utkatāsana			8	8	10	7		

S.No	Āsana	Weeks							
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5 th	6th	7th	8th
18	<i>Parivrta Trikonāsana</i> left hand inside of right foot							5	5
19	<i>Ardha Chandrāsana</i>						15	6	6
20	<i>Parśvōttānāsana</i> standing with concave back and hands on waist	9	11				16		
21	<i>Prasārita Padōttānāsana</i> hands down, head down		12	9	9				
22	<i>Adho Mukha Svanāsana</i> concave back	10	13						
23	<i>Uttanāsana</i> <i>Baddha Hasta Uttanāsana</i> concave back			10	10			7	7
24	<i>Pādāṅguśthāsana</i> feet together, concave back					20	18		
25	<i>Virāsana</i>					21	20	8	8
26	<i>Parvatāsana in Virāsana</i>							9	9
27	<i>Adho Mukha Virāsana</i>							10	10
28	<i>Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana</i>							11	11
29	<i>Dandāsana</i> <i>Urdhva Hasta Dandāsana</i>	11	14					13	13
30	<i>Śirsāsana</i> <i>Pādāṅguśtha Dandāsana</i>	12	15					14	14
31	<i>Ardha Śirsāsana</i> <i>Ardha Halāsana</i>	13	16					15	15
32	<i>Eka Pada Sarvāṅgāsana</i> swinging from floor to rest feet on the wall							16	16
33	<i>Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana</i>							20	20
34	<i>Supīa Konāsana</i>								
35	<i>Halāsana</i>								
36	<i>Karmapiḍāsana</i>								

		Weeks							
S.No	Āsana	1st	2nd	3 rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
37	Paśchimōtānāsana	14	18	12	13	27	26	17, 19, 26	17, 19, 24
38	Jānu Śīrāsana							18	18
39	Setu Bandha Sarvāṅgāsana			13	14				
40	Śavāsana	15	19	14	15	28	27	27	25

		Weeks									
S.No	Āsana	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th		
1	Samasthiti	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
2	Ūrdhva Hastāsana	2		2							
3	Ūrdhva Baddhāṅgulīyāsana		2		2						
4	Uttihita Trikonāsana	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		
5	Virabhadraśana II	4	4	4	4						
6	Uttihita Parśvakonāsana	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	3		
7	Virabhadraśana I		6		6	4	4	4	4		
8	Virabhadraśana III		7	6	7		5	5			
9	Ardha Chandraśana	6		7	8		6	6			
10	Parivṛta Trikonāsana					5	7	7			
11	Vimānāsana					6	8				
12	Uttānāsana	7	8	8	9		9				
13	Parśvōttānāsana	8	9	9	10	7					
14	Prasārita Pādōttānāsana	9	10	10	11	8	10	8	5		
15	Upaviṣṭha Konāsana	10	11	11		15	18	15	13		
16	Svastikāsana	11	12		12						
17	Parvatāsana in Svastikāsana	12	13	12	13						
18	Virāsana	13	14	13							
19	Parvatāsana in Virāsana						15		10		
20	Supta Virāsana						16		11		
21	Baddha Konāsana					13	17	13	12		
22	Supta Baddha Konāsana					14		14			
23	Gomukhāsana			14							
	only leg position	14	15								

		Weeks									
S.No	Āsana	9th	10th	11th	12th	13 th	14 th	15th	16th		
24	Bharadvājāsana I only leg position			15	14	16	19	16	14		
25	Sālamba Śīrāsana	15	16								
	Urdhva Prasārita Eka Pāda Śīrāsana			16	15	17	20	17	15		
26	Adho Mukha Svanāsana	16	17								
27	Urdha Mukha Svanāsana	17	18	17	16	9	11	9	6		
28	Chaturanga Dandāsana	18	19	18	17	10	12	10			
29	Dandāsana					11		11	7		
30	Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana					12	13	12	8		
31	Eka Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana	19	20	19	18	18	21	18	16		
32	Supta Konāsana	20		20	19						
33	Halāsana		21	21	20						
34	Karnapīdāsana	21	22	22	21	19	22	19	17		
35	Supta Pādangusthāsana	22	23		22	20	23	20	18		
36	Urdhva Prasārita Pādāsana					21	24	21	19		
37	Paripurna Navāsana	23	24								
38	Jānu Śīrāsana			23	23		14		9		
39	Paśchimōttānāsana	24	25	24	24	23	26	23	21		
		25	26	25	25	22,24	25,27	22,24	20,22		
40	Śavāsana	26	27	26	26	25	28	25	23		

		Weeks							
S.No	Āsana	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th
1	Samasthiti								
2	Urdhva Hastāsana	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	Urdhva Baddhāṅguliyāsana	2		2		2	2	2	2
4	Gomukhāsana	3		3		3	3	3	3
5	Paśchima Baddha Hastāsana	4	2	4	2				
6	Paśchima Namaskārāsana	5	3	5	3				
7	Vrksāsana	6		6					
8	Utkatāsana	7	8	7	4	4			7
		8		8	5				

S.No	Āsana	Weeks									
		17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th		
9	Uttitha Trikonāsana	9	4	9	6	5	4	4	4		
10	Virabhadrāsana II	10	5			6	5	5	5		
12	Uttitha Parśvakonāsana	11	6	10		7	6	6	5		
13	Virabhadrāsana I	12	7	11	7	8	7	7	6		
14	Vimānāsana	13									
15	Ardha Chandrāsana		9		8		8		8		
16	Virabhadrāsana III		10	12	9		9		9		
17	Parivṛtta Trikonāsana		11	13		9		8			
18	Parivṛtta Parśvakonāsana - Vimānāsana		12	14		10		9			
19	Parśvōttānāsana	14	13	15	10	11		10			
20	Prasārita Pādōttānāsana	15	14	16	11	12		11			
21	Uttānāsana	16	15	17	12	13	10	12	10		
22	Pādangusthāsana	17	16	18	13		11		11		
23	Adho Mukha Śvānāsana	18	17	19	14	14		13			
24	Surya Namaskār	19	18	20	15						
	Samasthiti										
	Namaskārāsana										
	Urdhva Hastāsana										
	Uttanāsana										
	Adho Mukha Śvānāsana										
	Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana										
	Chaturanga Dandāsana										
	Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana										
	Adho Mukha Śvānāsana										
	Uttānāsana										
	Urdhva Hastāsana										
	Namaskārāsana										
	Samasthiti										
25	Virāsana	20	19	21	16	15	12	14	12,18		
26	Parvatāsana in Virāsana	21		22			18		19		
27	Gomukhāsana		20		17	23	19	22	20		

S.No	Āsana	Weeks							
		17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th
28	Parighāsana	22	21	23		16		15	
29	Sālamba Śīrāsāna	23	22	24	18	24	20	23	21
30	Bhāradvājāsana 1 (on chair) without holding					28		27	
	Holding	24	23						
31	Dandāsana			25	19				
32	Urdhva Hasta Dandāsana	25	24	26	20	17	13	16	13
33	Pādāṅguṣṭha Dandāsana					18	14	17	14
34	Upaviṣṭha Konāsana					19	15	18	15
35	Padāṅguṣṭha Upaviṣṭha Konāsana	26		27		35	17,33	34	17
36	Baddha Konāsana	27		28		20		19	
37	Svastikāsana	28		29			16		16
38	Parvatāsana in Svastikāsana	29		30		21		20	
39	Paschimottānasana		25		21	22		21	
40	Jānu Śīrāsana	30	26	31	22	31	30	30	31
41	Trianga Mukhaikapāda Paschimottānasana	31	27	32	23	32	31	31	32
42	Marichyāsana 1	32	28	33	24	33	32	32	33
43	Adho Mukha Upaviṣṭha Konāsana			34	25	34		33	34
44	Paripurna Navāsana	33		35	26				
45	Paschimōttānāsana		29		27				
46	Supta Baddha Konāsana	34,41	30,36	36,41	28,35				
47	Supta Virāsana	35		37					
48	Sālamba Sarvaṅgasana		31		29				
49	Eka Pada Sarvāṅgāsana	36	32	38	30	25	21	24	22
50	Parsvaika Pāda Sarvāṅgāsana	37					22		23
51	Ardha Halāsana		33		31		23		24
52	Halāsana						24		25
53	Karnapīdāsana	38	34	39	32	26	25	25	26
54	Supta Konāsana	39			33		26		27
55	Parsva Halāsana	40		40			27		28
56	Bhāradvājāsana I		35		34	27	28	26	29
57	Bhāradvājāsana II					29	29	28	30
	only leg position					30		29	

S.No	Āsana	Weeks											
		17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th				
58	Viparīta Karni					36		35					
59	Śavāsana	42	37	42	36	37	34	36	35				

S.No	Āsana	Weeks				
		25th	26th	27th	28th	
1	Samasthiti	1	1	1	1	
2	Ūrdhva Hastāsana	2		2		
3	Ūrdhva Baddhanguliyāsana	3		3		
4	Gomukhāsana	4	2	4	2	
5	Paschimā Namaskārāsana	5	3	5	3	
6	Vrkāsana	6		6		
7	Utkatāsana	7	4	7	4	
8	Uttihita Hasta Padāsana	8	5	8	5	
9	Parsva Hasta Padāsana	9	6	9	6	
10	Uttihita Trikonāsana	10	7	10	7	
11	Virabhadrāsana II		8		8	
12	Uttihita Parśvakonāsana	11	9	11	9	
13	Virabhadrāsana I	12	10	12	10	
14	Ardha Chandrāsana	13		13		
15	Virabhadrāsana III	14		14		
16	Parivṛtta Trikonāsana	15	11	15	11	
17	Parivṛtta Parśvakonāsana - Vimānāsana	16	12	16	12	
18	Parighāsana	17	13	17	13	
19	Parśvottānāsana	18	14	18	14	
20	Prasārita Pādottānāsana	19	15	19	15	
21	Uttānāsana	20	16	20	16	
22	Pādangusthāsana	21	17	21	17	
23	Adho Mukha Śvānāsana	22	18	22	18	
24	Surya Namaskar	23		23		
	Note: Repeat as per the capacity					
	Samasthiti					

S.No	Asana	Weeks			
		25th	26th	27th	28th
	Namaskārāsana				
	Urdhava Hastāsana				
	Uttānāsana				
	Adho Mukha Śvānāsana				
	Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana				
	Chaturanga Dandāsana				
	Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana				
	Adho Mukha Śvānāsana				
	Uttānāsana				
	Urdhva Hastāsana				
	Namaskārāsana				
	Samasthiti				
25	Urdhva Mukha Śvānāsana	24	19	24	19
26	Dhanurāsana	25	20	25	20
27	Śalabhāsana	26	21	26	21
28	Ustrāsana	27	22	27	22
29	Adho Mukha Śvānāsana	28	23	28	23
30	Parvatāsana in Svastikāsana	29	24	29	24
31	Parvatāsana in Virāsana	30	25	30	25
32	Bharadvājāsana I	31	26	31	26
33	Bharadvājāsana II	32	27	32	27
34	Supta Pādangusthāsana I and II	33	28	33	28
35	Sālamba Śirsāsana	34	29	34	29
36	Sālamba Sarvāṅgāsana	35	30	35	30
37	Eka Pada Sarvāṅgāsana		31		31
38	Parsvaika Pada Sarvāṅgāsana		32		32
39	Ardha Halāsana		33		33
40	Halāsana	36	34	36	34
41	Karnapidāsana		35		35
42	Supta Kōnāsana		36		36
43	Parśva Halāsana		37		37
44	Paśchimōttānāsana	37	38	37	38
45	Śavāsana	38	39	38	39

Notes

Notes